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THE

HISTORY

OF

THE BRITISH EMPIRE

IN

INDIA.

BY THE

REV. G. R. GLEIG, M.A. M.R.S.L. &c.

THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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When the subject of the following volumes was first proposed to me, and I undertook to discuss it, it was my intention to produce nothing more than a connected narrative of the rise and progress of the British empire in Asia. This I believed to be a task of no great difficulty; at least I was willing to persuade myself that with my previous reading it might be accomplished with comparative ease to myself, and not without benefit to others; but I soon found that any attempt to separate the earlier from the later portions of Indian history would involve my details in a degree of obscurity, such as neither digressions nor explanations would suffice effectually to remove. I was, accordingly, induced to extend my plan, so as to embrace the annals of India from the

earliest times—a measure which, though it has added ten-fold to the obstacles which I have been myself called upon to encounter, will not, I trust, be found to detract from the value of my work in the eyes of the general reader.

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HISTORY OF INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

Early Civilization of the Hindoos—Their arrival in India—Treatment of the Aborigines—Their forms of Government and Civil Institutions.

The track of country, of which modern European writers treat, under the general appellation of Hindostan, is situated in the north-eastern quarter of Asia, where it is comprehended within the latitudes of 8° and 35° North, and the longitudes of 68° and 92° East. It is bounded on the north by the Himalaya mountains, a lofty and extensive range, which, commencing at the Indus, and terminating beyond Bootan, separate it from the table land of Thibet and the Tartarian deserts. Towards the south it is everywhere washed by the ocean, on the west by the river Indus, whilst a range of hills and forests, which skirt the provinces of Chittagong and Tipara, form, with an angle of the Bramaputra, its not very accurately marked boundary towards the east. The extreme length of Hindostan has been computed to exceed 1900 miles, its extreme

breadth has been taken at 1500; yet such is the irregularity of its form that the total superficial area cannot be estimated at more than 1,280,000 English square miles.*

"The principal geological features of this region," says one, to whose labours geography is largely indebted,† "are the vast Gangetic plains, the great sandy desert of the Indus, the elevated table land above the Ghauts, and the Himalayan, Vandhyan, and Ghaut chain of mountains with their subordinate ranges. There are no lakes of any considerable magnitude, but many morasses, especially an enormous saline one named the Runn. There are no volcanoes in a state of activity, nor is the existence of extinguished ones clearly established. Earthquakes, although frequent, with the exception of one in Cutch, of very recent occurrence, have never been destructive. The seasons, winds and rains are periodical, and throughout the whole space, what are called the monsoons more or less prevail. Within the geographical limits of Hindostan every degree of temperature is to be found, from burning heat to perpetual congelation, but with the exception of an Alpine tract among the northern mountains, the climate is

* This district is marked out as it were by nature into three grand divisions. The first and greatest of these, called Hindostan Proper, embraces all the provinces north of the Nerbudda, from the Indus in the east to the borders of Chittagong. The second, called the Deccan, includes all within the Nerbudda and the Kistna. The third, or India south of the Kistna, takes in the remainder of the Peninsula. These are important particulars and must be borne in mind.

† Mr. Hamilton, author of a Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan.

strictly tropical, and promotes the growth of all congenial fruits, plants and vegetables, in the most luxuriant profusion; although the soil in most parts wants strength and tenacity. Minerals are abundant, but little worked, and there are few countries that spontaneously produce so great a variety of saline substances."

Besides these more general features, Hindostan is remarkable for the size and number of its rivers, of which no fewer than thirteen are enumerated by Mr. Hamilton as being of the first magnitude. These traverse a space of country, from their respective fountains to their mouths, which varies from 1700 to 400 miles, and besides these there are many others, "which in Europe would be reckoned large rivers." Of its harbours and roadsteads on the other hand, less can be said in praise, the coast gradually shelving off so as to hinder a large vessel from approaching within a mile and a half of the shore, whilst of islands there are none, with the solitary exception of Ceylon, which deserve to be spoken of in other terms than as rocks or sand banks.*

This interesting country has long been in the possession of a race of men as singular in their moral and political habits as they are strongly marked by the peculiarity of their physical con-

* This description applies only to Hindostan according to the modern sense of that term. The East Indies of the Middle Ages, like the India of Classical times, comprehended the Burman empire, Siam, Camboja, Cochin-China, and Malay, with the islands of Sumatra, the Moluccas, Java, &c. in the Indian Sea. Its limits towards the west were likewise very extensive.

formation. Like other branches of the human family, which have dwelt long in the same place, the Hindoos lay claim to an antiquity of descent quite inconsistent with reason; yet is there good ground to believe that even in this respect their claim is at least as well founded as that of any other tribe with which we are acquainted. It would appear, moreover, that the Hindoos were not only inhabitants of the country which they still hold, at a very early period in the world's history, but that long before they became objects of inquiry to European investigators, they had made considerable advances towards a state of high comparative civilization. We learn from Diodorus and Arrian that both Alexander in the provinces on the Indus, and Megasthenes as ambassador among the Practii, whose territories comprehended the states of Bengal, Bahar, and Oude, found a people resembling in every important particular the present possessors of these regions, and that the order and condition in which they lived was represented by the people themselves to have prevailed among their ancestors from ages the most remote. With such evidence before us, it were absurd to deny to the Hindoos whatever of honour belongs to an origin buried in obscurity, whilst of the degree of civilization to which they had then attained, we are not without grounds on which to form at least a tolerably just conception.

It may be assumed as a general rule, applicable to mankind in all ages and countries, that wherever society is divided into distinct classes, where the higher order of mechanical arts are practised, and commerce, both foreign and domestic, is carried

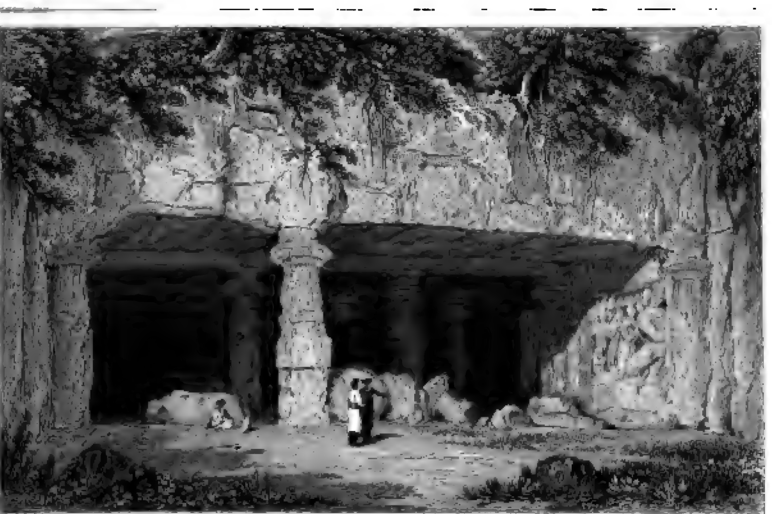
on to a large extent, rapid strides have been made from a state of barbarism to one of refinement. No fact can, however, be better attested than that these three marks of a people not absolutely savage have from time immemorial existed in Hindostan. Prior to the records of authentic history, and even before the most remote era to which their own traditions pretend to reach, the whole body of the people was divided into four orders or castes, to each of which its own duties and class of occupations were specifically assigned. The highest, or Brahmin caste, had it strictly in charge to study the principles of religion, to conduct its ceremonies, and to cultivate the sciences. They were, to use the words of an elegant historian, "the priests, the instructors, and the philosophers of the nation."* Next in dignity to them were the Kshittree, or Warrior caste, whose business it was to hold the reins of civil government, and to defend the nation. In peace they were its rulers and magistrates; in war they were the generals who commanded its armies and the soldiers who fought its battles. Below them again stood the Visya, Bhyse, or Weysh caste, employed in trade, agriculture, arms, and husbandry; whilst the Sudra, or Sooder caste, the lowest of all, included the manufacturers, mechanics, and agricultural and menial servants.

But the distinctions in Hindoo society, recognised from times the most remote, ended not here. The Hindoos of old, like the ancient Egyptians, appear to have esteemed trades and professions hereditary in the families of such as exercised

* Dr. Robertson.

them; and hence there are, and have ever been, as many castes or classes among them as there are different modes of turning human ingenuity to account. Now, though it be undeniable that customs which restrict the son to the business of his father are not in accordance with our ideas of the most polished state, it is equally certain that the separation of professions at all implies an improvement upon the early stages of social life, when arts are so few and so simple that each man is sufficiently master of them all to satisfy every demand of his own limited desires.

When we look again to the habits of life which have immemorially subsisted among the Hindoos, we discover that they are in many respects such as no people in a savage state, or in a state but a little way removed from savage, ever think of cultivating. The barbarian may till the ground with such implements as he possesses; he may sow the grain, and reap the corn when it is ripe; but the absolute barbarian dreams not of obtaining, by artificial means, that moisture, without a due supply of which his seed will give no return. In Hindostan, however, the utmost care seems at all periods to have been taken that the means of irrigation should everywhere be abundant: indeed, the remains of numerous tanks and water-courses, where none now exist, furnish ample proof that, in this respect at least, the present generation are far behind their remote ancestors. Again, the barbarian, satisfied with such apparel as the skins of animals slain in the chase afford, either directs no share of his attention to manufactures, or produces



Drawn by W Westall [illegible]




stuffs which cannot possibly be used as an article of advantageous traffic. The Hindoos, on the other hand, have, from the earliest ages, been famed for the fine texture and exquisite colouring of their cloths: indeed it is within the memory of the present generation that even the manufacturers of Manchester and Glasgow, with all their superiority of machinery, were incapable of producing goods fit to be brought into competition with the silks and cottons of Hindostan.

In like manner it may with truth be asserted, that men do not begin to study the principles either of polished architecture or sculpture till civilization has taught them to distinguish between mere necessaries and elegancies. Hindostan, however, abounds with monuments both of the architectural and statuary skill of its possessors. Not to lay too much stress upon the magnificence of the Temples at Elora and Elephanta, it is impossible to travel through the Carnatic or Mysore* without discovering innumerable proofs that, whatever may be the case now, there must have been a time when these regions were, like ancient Greece, the nurseries of the fine arts. "It may safely be pronounced (says a high authority,) that no part of the world has more marks of antiquity, fine arts, sciences,

* It is in these countries that we are compelled to look for the most perfect specimens of Hindoo taste, because there the Mussulmans were not guilty of the excesses which marked the course of their conquests in Hindostan. No doubt the Carnatic and Mysore are, comparatively speaking, modern Hindoo colonies; but the knowledge which the people possessed there was derived from the same source which gave knowledge to their countrymen north of the Nerbudda.

and civilization, than the Peninsula of India from the Ganges to Cape Cormorin. I think the carving on some of the pagodas and choultries, as well as the grandeur of the work, exceed anything executed now-a-days, not only for the delicacy of the chisel, but the expense of construction, considering in many instances to what distance the component parts were carried and to what height reared."*

It is true, that in the construction and decoration of their private dwellings, the Hindoos seem at no period to have aimed either at elegance or splendour; but this fact, though it undeniably prevents us from placing them in the foremost rank of polished nations, tells nothing against the inferrence which we have ventured to draw from the care bestowed upon the adornment of their public buildings. The temple of the savage is as rude as his own rude hut, and his statuary never goes beyond an imperfect chiseling of some rough block of wood or stone.

But perhaps there is no better criterion by which to try the civil condition of any people, than is afforded by an examination into the nature of the intercourse which they maintain with other nations. Commerce among mere savages, and among men in the first stage beyond the savage, is confined strictly to a barter of one species of natural productions for another; conducted without order or system, and generally speaking at random. No roads are formed, nor inns built, to facilitate the transport of goods from one inland station to another, and as to adventures by sea, these are

* Colonel Call, Philosophical Transactions, vol. lxii. p. 354.

never attempted. Now it is beyond dispute, that previous to the Macedonian invasion, Hindostan was intersected by roads, the courses of which were marked by stones, as the several stages were supplied with choultries,* or places of rest; whilst one of the first clauses in the Institutes of Menu† relates to the interest of money, and the limited rate of it in different cases, with an exception in favour of sea adventures.

Looking further down the vista of time, again, we not only discover that Hindostan continued to be a commercial country, but ascertain its very exports and imports. The Greeks and Romans procured from India ivory, spices, precious stones, silks, and cotton piece goods, in exchange for woollen cloths of a light texture, linen in chequer-work, precious stones, and some aromatics not known in the country; coral, storax, glass vessels of different kinds; wrought silver; Italian, Greek, and Arabian wines; brass, tin, lead, girdles, and sashes; melilot; cut glass; red arsenic; black lead; and gold and silver. A commerce such as this, however, could not be conducted by a people absolutely barbarous; indeed, there are articles specified here, which would neither be coveted nor produced by men even in the first stage of incipient civilization.

There is yet one other matter to which it is necessary to advert, ere passing on to more interesting topics. The state of literature in ancient

* See Asiatic Researches.

† Of the great antiquity of many portions at least of this work no doubt can exist, and there is good ground for asserting, that this law relative to trade is not less ancient than any.

Hindostan, and the progress made by its inhabitants in the cultivation of the pure sciences, equally indicate, that they were very far removed from the degraded condition of men ignorant of the arts and conveniencies of social life. It is said, indeed, though we suspect somewhat rashly, that in historical records properly so called, the libraries of Hindostan are barren.* The case may be so; but of poetry, lyrical, heroic, and dramatic, there is no deficiency; and however common among rude tribes the two former species may be, the drama has never yet flourished except where civilization had made some progress. In like manner the Hindoos appear to have been, at an early period, so far masters of astronomy, as to be able to calculate eclipses accurately, and upon sound principles, while numeration by decimals, an art but of yesterday's growth in Europe, may be said to be indigenous in Hindostan. Then again we have the political and moral treatises of this people, abounding, indeed, in contradictions and absurdities, yet not without a certain degree of merit, sufficient at least to redeem their compilers from the charge which has sometimes been brought against them, that they were either ignorant or careless how to distinguish between right and wrong.

But though we thus express ourselves, and though we readily avow our belief, that the Hindoos two or three thousand years ago had attained to a state of refinement, greatly surpassing that which

* A different opinion is held by Colonel Tod, in his valuable and elaborate Annals of Rajasthan, and Mr. Wilson has clearly shown, that Cashmere, at least, can boast of its Book of Chronicles.

is exhibited by their descendants of the present times, it is very far from our design to speak of them as at any period a people absolutely enlightened. From the line of argument assumed in the preceding pages it will be seen, that we are as little disposed to fall into this error, as we are inclined with the disciples of the modern school to regard them as mere barbarians. The terms civilized and barbarous, to whatever people applied, are, and necessarily must be, arbitrary and relative. If a comparison be instituted between the Hindoos as they appeared to Alexander and the polished inhabitants of modern Europe, then indeed shall we be compelled to speak of the former as barbarians; if the contrast be between them and the Aborigines of Britain, as the latter are described by Cæsar and Tacitus, then will the reverse of barbarism be predicated of the ancient Hindoos.

It is exceedingly unsatisfactory to learn, under such circumstances, that there is perhaps no race of men in existence over whose early history a more impenetrable veil of fable and obscurity is cast. In the Vedas and Shasters, or sacred books of the Brahmins, we discover little besides incredible descriptions of impossible events, placed, some of them, as far back as four millions of years ago. We are told of the first creation of matter in terms calculated to excite any feeling besides admiration; of the division of time into four* *yugs* or ages, of

* These are: 1, The Satya yug, comprehending a space of 1,728,000 years. 2, The Trita yug, 1,296,000 years. 3, The Dwapar yug, 864,000 years. And 4, or the present, the Cali yug, which will extend to 432,000 years. The last yug, or age, began 3,094 years before Christ, and corresponds very nearly with the era of Noah's Deluge.

which the three former comprehend a space of no less than 3,888,000 years;—of one sovereign, named Satyavratta, the father of the present race of men, who swayed the sceptre during an entire *yug*, and of other matters equally puerile and extravagant. But of any clue by which to arrive at a knowledge of the truth, or which might aid us in the construction of even a plausible hypothesis, it must be confessed that the sacred books are destitute. In like manner the great heroic poem, the Mahabhrata, though more susceptible of a rational interpretation, is so obscured in allegory and fiction as to render it but an insecure guide to the investigator of Hindoo history. We are assured, indeed, that it was composed between the years 1170 and 1180 before Christ; and we have reason to believe that it was intended to commemorate some of those wars which the Hindoos waged with the tribes whom they eventually supplanted; but both the date and course of the war in question are unknown, and will probably continue unknown to the end of time. It were vain, therefore, to attempt a circumstantial narrative of events, of which no authentic tradition remains; or to hazard so much as a conjecture concerning points where we feel ourselves to be absolutely without a guide.

Abandoning, therefore, all idea of tracing this singular people to their origin, we must content ourselves with stating that the opinion which once attributed to them the character of "Autochthones" seems now to be universally condemned. The researches of modern inquirers have distinctly shown that the country which we denominate Hindostan was originally peopled by a variety of

barbarous tribes—of which the remains are still to be found, in a state of independence, among the fastnesses of Gundwana and other inaccessible districts.* These appear, at no period, to have acknowledged any such distinctions as prevail throughout all the branches of the Hindoo family. They ever were and still continue to be ignorant of the institution of castes; they are worshippers of tutelary gods, unknown among the people of the plains; they do not regard the cow as sacred, nor follow any of the customs practised in the open country; indeed, their complexion and features, not less than their general manners, point them out as a race totally distinct from both the Hindoos and Mussulmans.

At what precise era these savages were first invaded we are without grounds on which to hazard a guess, further than that the calamity seems to have fallen upon them many centuries prior to the composition of the Mahabhrata. We are equally ignorant of the exact route by which the invaders made good their incursions; but that they came from the north, or north-west, and spread gradually towards the east and south, a variety of circumstances lead us to believe. All tradition represents the Brahminical institutions as of older date in the western than in the eastern provinces, whilst in the

* "Of the primitive inhabitants," says Colonel Tod, "we may enumerate, the Mienas, the Mieras, the Goands, the Bhils, the Sarjas, the Aheras, the Goojurs, and those who inhabit the forests of the Nerbudda, the Sone, the Mahanadi, the mountains of Sorgooja, and the Lesser Nagpore; many of whom are still but little removed from savage life, and whose dialects are as various as their manners."—*Annals of Rajasthan*, p. 558.

farthest south, we have very satisfactory proof that they were absolutely unknown till about the period of the birth of Christ. Thus, in the Institutes of Menu, of which a compilation was made by Kulluca, B. C. 880, we discover a manifest allusion to the settlements then organized by the followers of Brahma. "Between the two divine rivers, Saraswati and Drishdawati, lies the tract of land which the sages have named Brahmavarta, because it was frequented by the Gods. Curuckshetra, Matsya, Panchala, or Canyacubja, and Surasena or Mattura, form the region called Brahmarsi, distinguished from Brahmavarta. That country which lies between Hemavat (the snowy region) and Vindhaya, to the east of Vineswara (Guzerat), and to the west of Pryag (Allahabad) is celebrated by the title of Medha Desa (middle region). As far as the eastern and as far as the western oceans, between the mountains just mentioned, lies the tract which the wise have named Aryaverta, or inhabited by respectable men. That land on which the black antelope naturally grazes is fit for the performance of sacrifices; but the land of Mlechas, or those who speak barbarously, differs widely from it."* Now, from these expressions, it appears evident, first, that in the ninth century before Christ, the Hindoos had not penetrated to the south of the Vindhaya range, consequently that the Deccan and the peninsula were yet possessed by the Aborigines; and, secondly, that when Menu wrote, there were numerous tracts, even to the north of the Deccan, which still afforded shelter to the remnants of the same people. It is scarcely necessary to observe,

* Houghton's Institutes of Menu.

that the black antelope grazes only upon open plains, where it is safe from the sudden attacks of beasts of prey; it was, therefore, of the open plains, and of them alone, that in the age of Menu his countrymen had made themselves masters.

Whether the Hindoos brought with them into their new abodes those stern and immovable customs which separate for ever the descendants of one man from those of another, authorities are not agreed. Whilst some assert boldly that the case was so, others, with no less earnestness, contend that the distinctions of society recognised among them were originally analogous to those which prevailed elsewhere, and that the stricter order which now holds good, was gradually introduced as knowledge began to centre in the priesthood. Though we are not called upon to decide a question which can boast of very able polemics on both sides, we may be permitted to observe, that their mode of acting towards the conquered Aborigines furnishes ground for believing that the Hindoos were, from their first arrival in India, habituated to the order of castes. In no instance can it be shown that the victors became thoroughly amalgamated with the vanquished, or admitted them to the full privileges of citizenship. On the contrary, the Hindoos no sooner made themselves absolute masters of any district, than they reduced to slavery its ancient owners; from whom, not less than from impure connections among themselves, are descended the present Pariars or outcasts of Hindostan. It is true that here and there marriages were contracted between the new and the ancient proprietors of the soil, from which have sprung some of the less pure

tribes, particularly the Bhuleelas and others in Rajasthan; but, generally speaking, the Aborigines were kept, till the era of the Mahomedan conquest, in the state of slavery in which they are still to be found in the further peninsula.

In this state affairs seem to have continued till about two hundred years before Christ; the foreigners retaining possession of the plains and more accessible districts, whilst such of the Aborigines as preferred independence to slavery took shelter in the fastnesses. As yet, however, no effort had been made to pass the Nerbudda river; but there occurred at last a revolution in Guzerat, which threw the authority of Western India into new hands, and forced onwards the stream of colonization violently towards the south. Colonel Tod informs us, that in the second century prior to the Christian era the Brahmins of Guzerat "created a new tribe"—in other words, gave authority to a new race of warriors, whom they designated by the title of Agniculas or the fiery generation. These, dividing into four branches, made a conquest of the whole of Upper Hindostan; whilst the princes whom they defeated retired across the Nerbudda, and took possession of new settlements, as their ancestors had taken possession of those from which they were now expelled. "This tradition," observes Colonel Briggs, "receives confirmation by another fact, which is, that although there are grants and historical records in the south which go back to about the period of the Christian era, there is no satisfactory proof that the country was occupied by Hindoos much before that time." Thus it appears that the conquest of the Hindoos, how-

ever early begun, were not completed till times comparatively modern, nor extended, even at the last, into every corner of the great country to which they have given their name.

Whilst the aboriginal savages were thus daily straitened in their seats, the Hindoos themselves by no means enjoyed an indemnity from the evils which they had brought upon others. Hordes of Scythians, from the north and north-west, repeatedly broke in upon them; and it is a fact, not less curious than instructive, that the religious tenets of these strangers, though differing in many minor points, corresponded in all important particulars with those of the Hindoos. The consequence was, that the latter underwent here and there various modifications, and that sects sprang up professing the remarkable varieties in faith which prevail among the Hindoo races at this day. It is highly probable, likewise, that to the introduction of so many fresh settlers may be traced back those minute diversities, both in civil customs and general character, which are every where to be found in Hindostan. To the frequent intermixture among them of hardy warriors from the north, the bold and manly bearing of the Rajpoots may be mainly attributed, while their more remote situation, not less than the fertility of their soil, has doubtless tended to render the Bengalese the flexible and effeminate race which we find them.

It accords not with the plan of a work like the present, to offer any minute description of the circumstances which attended the establishment of the Hindoo governments in India. The mate-

rials accessible for such an undertaking are indeed so scanty, that few inducements present themselves to engage in it; for in spite of all that has been done by Colonel Tod, Sir John Malcolm, and others, we are yet profoundly in the dark touching the very first question which arises. We know not whether the strangers crossed the mountains under one leader, or under many: we are consequently unable to ascertain whether they, in the first instance, created a single empire, or divided into several nations according to their genealogies; but the latter arrangement, as it agrees best with the ordinary courses of events, may be considered as at least more probable than the former. Be this, however, as it may, we cannot discover, in after-ages, any trace of that colossal sovereignty, which was once supposed to have extended itself from Cape Cormorin to the plains of Tartary. On the contrary, the most powerful of the states, by which Alexander was opposed, appears to have embraced no more than a portion of Hindostan Proper; and there is good reason to believe, that even it was held together by ties widely different from those which unite one province of an European empire to another.

The striking resemblance which existed in many particulars between the institutions of ancient India and the feudal system in Europe, has been no where more elaborately pointed out than by Colonel Tod in his Annals of Rajasthan. From him we learn, that prior to the Macedonian invasion, Hindostan was divided into a number of kingdoms, which varied both in the extent and nature of their resources according to circum-

stances; that each of these was made up of a multitude of smaller principalities, the several chiefs of which owed allegiance to one common lord; that these chiefs held their lands by tenure of military service on the payment of certain tribute to their superior, and that they, in their turn, had vassals under them, from whom they exacted similar marks of feudal dependency. Among the north-western tribes, for example, we learn, "that the country was partitioned into districts, each containing from fifty to one hundred towns and villages, though sometimes exceeding that proportion. The great number of Chourasis* leads to the conclusion, that portions to the amount of eighty-four had been the general sub-division. Many of these yet remain—as the Chourasi of Jehazpoor, and of Komulmér, tantamount to the old hundreds of our Saxon ancestry. A circle of posts was distributed, within which the quotas of the chiefs attended, under the Foujdar of the Sima, (vulgo Seem,) or commander of the border It was found expedient to appoint from court this lord of the frontier, always accompanied by a portion of the royal insignia, standard, kettle-drums, and heralds, and being generally a civil officer, he united to his military office the administration of justice. The higher vassals never attended personally at these posts, but deputed a confidential branch of their family with the quota required. For the government of the districts there were conjoined a civil and military officer; the

* The numeral 84.

latter generally a vassal of the second rank. Their residence was the chief place of the district, commonly a strong hold."*

Again we are told, that in Mewar there existed a regular classification of nobles, who took rank according to the revenues arising from their hereditary domains. "In class 1," says Colonel Tod, "we have the sixteen whose estates were from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand rupees† and upwards, of yearly rent. These appear in the presence only on special invitation upon festivals and solemn ceremonies, and are the hereditary councillors of the crown.—2d class, from five to fifty thousand rupees. Their duty is to be always in attendance. From these chiefly Foujdars and military officers are selected.—3d class is that of Gole, holding lands chiefly under five thousand rupees, though by favour they may exceed this limit. They are generally the holders of separate villages and portions of land; and in former times they were the most useful class to the prince. They always attended on his person, and indeed formed his strength against any combination or opposition of the higher vassals.—4th class—the offsets of the younger branches of the Rana's own family within a certain period, are called the *babas*, literally 'infants,' and have appanages bestowed on them. They hold on none of the terms of the great clans, but consider themselves at the disposal of

* Page 141.

† Estimating the rupee at two shillings, it will be easy to calculate the amount of revenue attached to each class of nobility.

the prince—these are more within the influence of the crown."

The same authority describes, with extraordinary clearness, a variety of customs, which point to a state of society in many respects resembling that which prevailed in England under the immediate successors of the Conqueror. Thus we have the chieftains of Mewar, Rajasthan, Kutch, &c. residing in castellated houses, built for the most part on the summits of rocks, or in the heart of some deep jungle, where they possessed over their people an authority more despotic than was exercised by the sovereign over any class of his subjects. We learn, too, that these petty princes contracted alliances, and carried on wars among themselves without any reference whatever to the crown; and that both their leagues of amity and their feuds descended, as among our own highlanders, with increasing violence from one generation to another. Even the sovereign* himself was not, it appears, always safe from the hostility of his barons, for the adherents of each chief considered themselves bound to follow their lord's standard whithersoever he might cause it to be borne. All this, it will be seen, carries the imagination back to those periods of turbulence and misrule, when in our own country the king could be regarded as no more than the chief

* Colonel Tod advances a variety of instances in which the Rajpoots followed their immediate chief into the field against their sovereign. The question was on one occasion put to a Rajpoot, to whom his allegiance was due, to the head of his clan or to the sovereign?—his answer was, "the one is master of the country, the other is master of my head."

of a confederation of chieftains; nor does the resemblance between the manners of Europe during the middle ages and those of Mewar and Rajasthan end even here. Among the inhabitants of both countries the obligations of vassalage, known by the term "feudal incidents," may be traced; for in both parts of the world there were reliefs, fines of alienation, escheats, aids, wardships, and marriage. A few words illustrative of these facts, may not, perhaps, prove uninteresting to the general reader.

1. Reliefs.—The first and most essential mark of a feudal relation is the system of relief,* which may be described as a perpetually recurring memorandum of the source of the grant, as well as a solemn renewal of the pledge which originally obtained it. "In Mewar, however," we are informed, "that it is a virtual and bonâ fide surrender of the fief and renewal thereof."—"On the demise of a chief the prince immediately sends a party, termed the Zubti, (sequestrator,) consisting of a civil officer and a few soldiers, who take possession of the estate in the prince's name. The heir sends his prayer to court to be installed in the property, offering the proper relief. This paid, the chief is invited to repair to the presence, where he performs homage, and makes protestations of service and fealty; he receives a fresh grant, and the inauguration terminates by the

* The relief has been defined to be, in Europe, "a sum of money due from every one holding or taking a fief by descent." In France the amount paid was one year's revenue of the fief. It is a curious coincidence, that the same fine of relief was exacted in Mewar.

prince girding him with a sword in the old forms of chivalry. It is an imposing ceremony, performed in a full assembly of the court, and one of the few which has never been relinquished. The fine paid, and the brand buckled to his side, a steed, turban, plume, and dress of honour given to the chief, the investiture is complete. The sequestrator returns to court, and the chief to his estate to receive the vows and congratulations of his vassals."

2. Fines of alienation.—Alienation, as it belongs not to the system of fiefs, properly so called, was never permitted, except under very particular circumstances, in Rajasthan.* "In Kutch, however, among the Jhareja tribes, sub-vassals may alienate their estates; though the privilege is dependent on the mode of acquisition."* The agricultural tenants, proprietors of land held of the crown, may alienate their rights upon a small fine, levied merely to mark the transaction. But the tenures of these non-combatants, and the holders of fees, are entirely distinct; *the agriculturist being the proprietor of the soil, the chief solely of the tax levied upon it.*

3. Escheats and forfeitures.—"The fiefs, which were only to descend in lineal succession, reverted to the crown on failure of heirs, as they could not be bequeathed by will. This answers equally well for England as for Mewar." In India, however, the practice of adoption has in all ages thrown obstacles in the way of escheats, which were not

* The cause of this will be assigned by and bye, when we come to treat of the nature of *property* in Hindostan.

experienced in Europe. Nevertheless, Colonel Tod informs us, "that he has seen escheats of this kind, and that he foresees more;" while forfeitures for crime, both in whole and in part, were not less frequent in the one region than in the other.

4. Aids.—"Aids, implying free gifts or benevolences as they were termed in an European code, are well known." The war benevolence, for example, was as fully recognised in Mewar as in Europe; and it is somewhat remarkable that it should have amounted to the same sum in both countries, namely, one-tenth. The marriage of the prince's children, likewise, furnished an excuse both in Rajasthan and in England, for the exaction of an aid from the great feudatories, who, in their turn, failed not to lay similar contributions upon their vassals.

5. Wardships.—By the feudal system of Europe, the sovereign is recognised as the guardian of such orphans as vassals may leave behind: though the charter of Henry I. promises the custody of heirs to the mother, or next of kin. "In like manner we find, that among the Rajpoots the sovereign himself often assumes the guardianship of minors: but the mother is generally considered the most proper guardian for her infant son. All others may have interests of their own: she can be actuated by his welfare alone. Custom, therefore, constitutes her the guardian; and with the assistance of the elders of her family, she rears and educates the young chief till he is fit to be girded with the sword."

6. Marriage.—This seems to be the least accu-

rately defined of the "feudal incidents" among the Rajpoots. "Refinement was too strong on the side of the Rajpoot to admit this incident, which, with that of wardship, (both partial in Europe,) illustrated the rapacity of the feudal aristocracy." "Every chief," says Colonel Briggs, "before he marries makes it known to his sovereign; but the latter has no controul over his choice. The Hindoo law points out the degree of consanguinity within which the Hindoo can, or cannot marry, and the ceremony is so closely connected with religion, that the sovereign can by no means interfere. The necessity for the king guarding the purity of the blood of the feudal knights, therefore, does not exist; nor would the feelings of the chivalrous Rajpoot submit to his sovereign's controul on a point so nearly connected with his own personal honour."* "Thus," to use the words of Colonel Tod, "setting aside marriage, which even in Europe was only partial and local, and alienation, four of the six chief incidents marking the feudal system, are in force in Rajasthan:" "whilst," according to Colonel Briggs, "the very same feudal incidents are found to have existed under the Gajpatti princes of Orissa, the Ramraja of Vijayanagar, under the Mahratta princes of Sattara and Kolapoor, and, generally speaking, wherever any remains of the pure Hindoo government are to be found."

Thus far the institutions of ancient India have been shown to bear a remarkable resemblance to the usages of our Norman ancestors; we come now

* Briggs on the Land-tax of the Hindoos.

to points where the resemblance wholly ceases, though fresh analogies are from time to time forced as it were upon our notice. The state of property under the Hindoo governments, more particularly of property in the soil, was totally at variance with the state of the same property in England during the reign of the Plantagenets. Whilst our feudal barons owned the whole of their respective domains, which were ploughed and cropped for their benefit by serfs and villains, the land among the Hindoos was the exclusive property of the men who kept it in cultivation; and who paid to their chiefs, not rent, in the legitimate acceptation of the term, but a tax varying in amount according to the value of the produce. Hence the same district could boast of various classes of persons, all of whom had an interest in its fruitfulness, and therefore in a certain sense deserved the appellation of landowners, which has somewhat unguardedly been bestowed upon them. Of these the highest in rank was the individual called among the Rajpoots, the Grassia Tahkur, or Lord of the portion—though the Bhoomia, or freehold Riyet, by whatever title recognised, was everywhere throughout Hindostan the real landlord. Whilst the former held his portion or share of the produce by grant renewable as shown above,* the latter needed no grant to legalize his title to the fields which his ancestors had tilled during count-

* The *gras*, or subsistence, was granted to the chief in recompense of his military services at home and abroad. Though resumable *de jure*, it appears never to have been resumed *de facto*, except in cases of rebellion or other crimes against the state.

less ages. He succeeded to them without the payment of any fine; he might sell, mortgage, or otherwise alienate them at pleasure; and they went, at his demise, according to the spirit of the Hindoo law, in equal portions among his children. The right to the property of the soil, indeed, he compared to the *d'Kye Dhorba*, (the grass which cannot be eradicated,) and he called the soil itself his *Vapota*, "the most emphatic, the most ancient, the most cherished, and the most significant phrase his language commands, for patrimonial inheritance."* He has nature and Menu in support of his claim, continues our author, and can quote the text alike compulsory on prince and peasant, "cultivated land is the property of him who cut away the wood, or who cleared and tilled it;" an ordinance binding on the whole Hindoo race, and which no international wars or conquest could overturn. In accordance with this principle is the ancient adage, not of Mewar only, but of all Rajpootana, "the government is owner of the rent, but I am master of the land." Nor in spite of the overwhelming influence of foreign conquest, is there a province of India, from Cape Cormorin to the northern mountains, where the remains at least of a similar principle will not be found to operate.

We have spoken of the produce of the soil as divided, in Hindostan, into portions—it will be necessary to explain whence the necessity for such division arose, as well as the purposes which it was designed to serve.

The original source of all taxation seems to have

* Colonel Tod.

every thing connected with it; the talliar and totie—the duty of the former appearing to consist in a wider and more enlarged sphere of action, in gaining information of crimes and offences, and in escorting and protecting persons travelling from one village to another,—the province of the latter appearing to be more immediately confined to the village, consisting, among other duties, in guarding the crops, and assisting in measuring them; the boundary-man, who preserves the limits of the village, or gives evidence respecting them in cases of dispute; the superintendent of water-courses and tanks, who distributes the water for the purposes of agriculture; the brahmin, who performs the village worship; the schoolmaster, who is seen teaching the children in the villages to read and write in the sand; the calendar brahmin, or astrologer, who proclaims the lucky or unpropitious periods for sowing or thrashing; the smith and carpenter, who manufacture the implements of agriculture and build the dwelling of the riyet; the potman, or potter; the washerman; the barber; the cow-keeper, who looks after the cattle; the doctor; the dancing girl, who attends at rejoicings; the musician and the poet." Such is the general description of an Indian village, as we find it in the pages of a work* more fertile in information on the subject of Hindoo institutions than any public document extant; but we must turn to other sources for the purpose of filling up the details of a picture of which the above may be considered as the outline.

* The Fifth Report of the Committee on East India affairs.

It will be seen from the terms employed in the preceding extract, that the village system of India was invented to serve the purposes of a country strictly agricultural; and that the institutions themselves have reference to a society employed exclusively in the cultivation of the soil, or in the supply of such articles as the necessities of the cultivators require. The truth, indeed, appears to be, that in India, as well as in other quarters of the globe, the conquerors gave up their attention to securing a property in the soil, long before they began to embark in trade. The order of each little community was accordingly formed in strict agreement with the wants of its members; nor was it till the latter became extended by the influence of causes which are continually operating in human affairs, that the former underwent any change. How these changes, or to speak more correctly, how these enlargements of the system came to be introduced, will best appear by tracing the system as it expands from its foundation.

Authorities are not agreed among themselves as to the source of those powers with which the Head of an Indian village was anciently invested. By some it is asserted that he was originally elected by the people;* by others, that the appointment came direct from the sovereign: but, however this may be, no doubt can exist that he became, as soon as nominated, the representative both of the inhabitants and of the government. It was his business, wherever the little community established

* Col. Briggs says, "The Gram Adikar, or village mayor, originally elected by the people, was at the same time the representative of the inhabitants and of the government."

itself, to allot the land in shares for occupation, and the water for irrigation; and, as head of the revenue department, to see that soil once occupied was not left untilled, nor permitted to escape its due proportion of public burthens. This was no sooner done, and the land parcelled out among the proprietors, than the petty republic may be said to have been constituted; after which its affairs went on from age to age according to a fashion which long usage, and hereditary prejudice, rendered both advantageous and acceptable to the people.

We now behold the Potail permanently settled as mayor or chief magistrate of a little community. Though his influence in this capacity arose out of his revenue appointment, it was, nevertheless, very considerable, and seems to have been generally exercised for the benefit of his fellow-parishioners. He was the head of the police, before whom offenders against the public peace were brought for trial: he decided disputes between man and man, either in person or by convening a court of arbitration; and he was the organ by which the supreme government caused the whole community to produce either the thief or the property stolen in case of robberies—or in more serious cases, as murder, the guilty person. But his main duty was to provide that the dues of government were regularly paid, upon which, indeed, he received a per centage, and for which he was held personally responsible.

To assist him in this matter, and in others scarcely less important, the Curnum was appointed,—an officer confessedly raised to his public

station by the sovereign, though equally useful to the people as to the prince. The Curnum seems to have been a sort of village notary or accountant, who registered the lands as allotted by the Potail; and kept ever after a strict account of such transfers, sales, rents, contracts, receipts, and disbursements, as occurred in the community. He formed thus a strong check upon the Potail, should the latter by accident seek to defraud either the villagers or the treasury; and he proved eminently useful to his fellow-villagers as a witness, in all cases of disputed rights, boundaries, or successions. Like the Potail, he also received, as a remuneration for his labours, a per-centage upon the gross amount of the collection; together with an allotment of land free of all public burthens.

It was the especial duty of the Talliar to watch the crops, whether growing or housed; to protect the lives and properties of the villagers; to observe all strangers, and make himself acquainted with their habits; and to guard travellers against violence or insult, as far as the bounds of his own village. The Totee, again, performed numerous meaner offices. He was the scavenger of the village; the executioner, and the messenger; and he assisted, should any disturbance arise, in quelling it, or in capturing or repulsing thieves who proved too strong or too wary for the Talliar. Of the rest of the village officers it will be unnecessary to say anything. Their titles alone sufficiently explain the nature of the duties which they were expected to discharge; whilst their remuneration arose partly from a collection made by authority for the purpose, partly from free gifts be-

stowed at stated seasons. Thus were the elements of a distinct community created in every little division of ancient India; and the influence exercised on the character of the people by their village institutions was incalculable.

We have hitherto looked to the condition of a village as it presented itself in its infancy,—when the mass of the community cultivated their own lands, and trades were exercised only by single families. As population increased, however, and the villages became more thickly inhabited, or as towns grew up where a few huts had formerly stood, various important alterations were necessarily introduced. It now became the practice for freehold Ryets to let their lands on lease, or otherwise, to farmers, who might be either natives of the same village with themselves, or strangers from a neighbouring parish. Mortgages, sales, and other changes of property followed, till in the end that nicely adjusted arrangement which planted its own proprietor upon every field, became, in some places, sadly impaired, and in others totally destroyed.* Again, the increase in the numbers of those who followed particular trades and crafts led to the introduction of partial jurisdictions. Each craft had now its head-man, analogous in some measure to our alderman of a ward, by whom the internal affairs of the body were regulated; and it is not a little remarkable, that both the mayor of the village, and the alderman of the craft, were assisted in the discharge of their duties by a council.

* The practice of holding the land of the village as a common property, is not unusual in some parts of India.

Perhaps there is not to be found in any part of the world an institution more remarkable than the Punchayet, (literally Court of *Five*,) or Court of Arbitration, of ancient India. It consisted of an assembly of the principal inhabitants of the town or village, varying from five to any given odd number, who were, in some cases, elected by the parties at variance—in others chosen by public authority, in consequence of their reputation for wisdom. In villages first settled, or continuing in a state of primitive simplicity, one Punchayet seems to have answered all ordinary purposes: in towns, or populous districts, every trade, as well as every craft, had its own Punchayet; but the duties of the assembly were everywhere the same, and its mode of discharging them immutable.

There appear to have been three distinct uses, to which the ordinary Punchayets were turned,—namely, in arbitrating disputes between man and man, in trying civil causes, and in investigating criminal cases affecting life or property. If a difference arose between two villagers respecting the conditions of a bargain, or an injury supposed to be sustained, the parties chose each an equal number of arbitrators; and, provided they could not agree farther, the Potail appointed an additional member to act as umpire in the Punchayet. This done the Punchayet met, generally under a tree or the shade of a roof, when the statements of the contending parties were delivered in, and the evidence in support of them adduced. No useless forms served to confuse the proceedings of the court. The members examined all witnesses orally, but never, except in extreme cases, on

oath; and, having satisfied themselves as to the rights of the disputants, they pronounced sentence summarily between them. From the sentence thus given there was no appeal; and as the services of the Punchayet were given free of all expense, an end was put at once to the dispute.

Very similar, both in its arrangement and mode of acting, was the Punchayet, assembled to try a cause involving a right to property, a question of succession, of debt, of disputed boundary, or of any other such matter. It is not quite clear whether in this case the litigants were permitted to choose their own arbitrators; but however this might be, the arbitrators themselves were invariably selected from among the inhabitants most celebrated for their rectitude, their impartiality, and their acquaintance with the laws and usages of the country. Like the Punchayet described already, this body consisted of an odd number, and met in some place where all that were desirous of watching its proceedings might attend. The litigants were then called upon to state their cases, witnesses were examined,* and deeds investigated, after which the assembly took time to deliberate, and then gave its decision. It is worthy of remark, that both in the former and the latter case the contending parties were required, previous to

* The most important testimony in such cases was sought for in the register books of the Curnum. As no matter of barter or exchange of property took place without his cognizance, and he was supposed to enter a record of all such transactions at the time, his accounts naturally carried with them great weight in determining the decisions of the Punchayet.

the opening of the court, to give security that they would abide by its decision. The amount of the security, however, was not so much looked to as the act of voluntary agreement; and hence two straws were quite as readily accepted as any other pledge.

The third and last description of Punchayet was that which met for the trial of individuals accused of more heinous crimes. It differed in many essential respects, both as to its composition and powers, from those enumerated already, and can hardly be said to have been recognised in the village institutions at all. No doubt the Potail might, if so disposed, call in the assistance of the principal villagers in deciding upon the nature of the evidence brought against an accused party, but the custom can hardly be treated as a component part of the internal and separate government to which the village communities were habituated. On the contrary, we are told by Sir John Malcolm, that "Punchayets, upon criminal cases, are called when a murder or capital crime is committed at a distance from the ruling authority, to aid in the investigation, and their opinion upon the guilt or innocence of the accused is transmitted to the prince, who frequently sends, upon receiving it, his orders for the release or execution of the prisoner. If the crime is committed at the capital, the ruler, if just and moderate, refers the case for examination to a Punchayet. These courts differ from others in essential particulars. The local manager, or collector, usually presides, while the members are generally all district or provincial officers. The prisoner is, however,

patiently heard, and he is allowed the aid of any of his family or caste. Indeed the principal persons of the latter always attend, as it is deemed as much a part of their duty to give assistance to the state in punishing delinquents, as it is to protect individuals of the tribe from unjust accusation or oppression."*

Independently of these Punchayets, each particular caste, profession, and trade, had its own council, for the trial of such questions as involved the rights and usages of the body; but the law, according to which the decisions were given, was under all circumstances essentially the same. It was that of custom, and of custom only: for though there doubtless existed in every state a code recognised at the capital, it is a grievous error to suppose that it was enforced even there, far less in the remote provinces, with the rigid exactness of an English system. It is true that certain general principles of justice and equity appear to have been every where acknowledged throughout Hindostan. The Institutes of Menu, indeed, with other tracts of a like description, were held in equal veneration from one extremity of India to another; but like our own statutes, the contents of these law books seem to have been unknown to the mass of the population, who regulated their own affairs entirely by tradition or local usage. Hence, even in the essential point of the management of the public revenue, we find that an absolute uniformity of system by no means prevailed; and if the case was so in a matter af-

* Malcolm's Central India, vol. ii. p. 290.

fecting the interests of the supreme government, it were vain to look for the reverse when private rights were concerned.

It has been stated, that the principle of Hindoo taxation resolved itself into a division of the produce of the soil between the land-owner, or occupant, and the government. In the earliest ages there is good reason to believe that such division took place in all districts and in all villages from year to year, and that the proportion allotted for the necessities of the state varied from one eighth to one seventeenth, according to the value and nature of the produce.* By degrees, however, innovations were introduced, the necessary consequents upon those changes in the state of society of which notice has already been taken; till in the end almost every variety of which the system was capable might be detected. Thus we find in one village, that the Head-man continued to subtract the sircar, or government proportion of the grain, from the stock of each husbandman, after it was got in. In another the harvest was annually valued, and a sum in money proportionate to the government share paid by the husbandman to the Potail. In a third district the crops were valued when green, and paid for according to estimate; in a fourth an estimate was taken and a bargain struck for a certain number of years together. Nor were there wanting places where the agents of

* There is a clause in the Institutes of Menu which refers especially to this matter, and permits the sovereign to exact, during war, to the amount of one fourth. Such was the tax paid to Porus, when Alexander invaded him.

government made their bargain, not with each Ryet separately, but with the whole body conjointly, or with one or two persons as representatives of the whole. Nevertheless the principle of the system was invariably the same. The government looked to the Potail, and the Potail to the Ryet; whilst the right on the part of government to hold surveys from time to time, in order to ascertain how far an increase might be demanded, or reductions were necessary, seems in no instance to have been disputed.

The description which we have given of the village system, as it operated in a single parish, may be received as equally applicable to the wider circle, within which any given number of parishes were included. If ten or twenty were united to form a district, the affairs of that district were superintended by a Head-man, whose authority in all matters, both of revenue and police, was in perfect agreement with the authority of the Potail. Like the Potail, this officer received his nomination from the supreme government; and, like the Potail, his labours were remunerated by a per-centage upon the gross amount of revenue collected within his Pergunnah. So also was it, with reference to the officers appointed to aid not less than to check him in the exercise of his functions. He, too, had his district register, with his Pykes or Peons, available in keeping the peace, and overawing robbers, and he, in his turn, was accountable to a functionary still higher in dignity than himself. Thus the system went on enlarging itself, till in the end it reached the throne, from

which all powers, as well as all civil and military honours, were understood to emanate.*

There cannot be a doubt that the whole of these officers, when originally appointed to their trusts, were regarded as mere servants of the state, removable at pleasure. In process of time, however, either from the weakness or improvidence of the government, the offices began to be assumed by the sons on the demise of their fathers, till before long the dignity of Potail† became, with all its privileges and immunities, strictly hereditary. It is true that in the higher departments the form of investiture was, for a time, at least, kept up. We have already shown that the son of a chieftain, among the Rajpoot tribes, was not permitted to assume the dignity of his father till after he had been arrayed in the robe of inauguration from his sovereign; while in regions where the feudal system appears not to have been so decidedly established, some, though a less, degree

* The condition of these local officers in the Mahratta country, is thus described by Mr. Elphinstone. " A Turuf is composed of an indefinite number of villages; several Turufs make a Pergunnah, which is under a Desmook, who performs the same functions towards the Pergunnah as the Potel towards the village. He is assisted by a Des Pandia, who answers to the Koolcurny or village register. It is universally believed in the Mahratta country that the Des Mooks, Des Pandias, &c., were all officers appointed by some former government, and it seems probable that these were the revenue officers of the Hindoo government. These officers still hold the lands and fees, which were originally assigned them as wages, and are considered as servants of the government."

† So highly is this rank esteemed, that sovereign princes cause it to be inserted, if they can, among the sounding titles usually assumed by them.

of ceremony was used. Here the Desmook, or Des Adekar, received simply a commission, for which he paid a certain fee; but even this practice ceased gradually to be enforced. It may be assumed, therefore, as a general rule, that the order of caste which tied all men down to the business or occupation of their fathers, extended its influence to the administration of state affairs, till every office, not immediately about the king's person, became hereditary in the family of him who discharged it.

We have arrived now at the highest station of all, the head of the supreme government, of the nature and proceedings of which a few words will suffice to convey a sufficiently accurate notion. Ostensibly, and theoretically despotic, the Raja, or sovereign of a Hindoo state, appears to have been subject, in all ages, to numerous restraints upon his caprices. In the first place, the rank allotted to him in a society, which more than any other with which we are acquainted, acknowledged the influence of religion, was not the most elevated. There was not a Brahmin in his dominions, however poor, that would condescend to eat from his dish, or whom he was not bound to treat with a certain degree of respect as spiritually his superior. This consideration alone could hardly fail to inspire the Rajah with more lowly notions of himself than are usually called into existence by the atmosphere of a court; whilst the fundamental laws of his country were not less plain in their definition of his duties, than in requiring obedience to be paid to him by his people.

Thus we find it affirmed, that "the magistrate* shall keep in subjection to himself his lust, anger, avarice, folly, drunkenness and pride; he who cannot keep these passions under his own subjection, how shall he be able to nourish or protect the people? Neither shall he be seduced by the pleasures of the chase, nor be perpetually addicted to play; nor must he be always employed in dancing, singing, and playing on musical instruments; nor must he sleep in the day time; nor shall he falsely accuse any one; nor shall he always remain concealed in his private apartment, nor practise the drinking of wine; nor shall he go to any place without a cause, and shall not dispraise any one without knowing his faults; nor shall he cause any molestation to men of worth; nor shall he put any person to death by artful and deceitful practices; nor shall he take away the property of any person; nor shall he envy another person's superior merit; nor shall he say that such persons as are men of capacity are men of no capacity; nor shall he abuse any person, and shall not hold any person guilty without the commission of a crime." Again, "such things as are not proper for him to take he shall not take on any pretence; and of such things as are right and proper for him to take, even though it be exceedingly minute, he shall not press his claim; and he shall esteem the subjects in the light of his children." Of a similar tendency to this are the following regulations. "The magistrate shall

* See Halhed's Gentoo Laws, where the term magistrate is invariably used instead of King, or Raja.

collect from his people the necessary tribute, and shall never commit injustice; he shall listen upon all occasions to such men as are possessed of an acute judgment, and who are very expert in all affairs. If a plunderer should attack the magistrate's kingdom, and grievously molest the people, the magistrate shall most surely punish him; if he does not, he is unworthy of the magistracy;" for "a magistrate who, without protecting and taking care of the subjects, collects the accustomed tribute from them, will go to hell."

In like manner we find in the Institutes of Menu explicit directions laid down for the conduct, both public and private, of the sovereign. "A king is created as the protector of all those classes and orders of men who, from the first to the last, discharge their duties;" whilst "a king addicted to vice arising from love of pleasure, will not only lose his wealth and virtue, but may even lose his life from public resentment."

It may be assumed, therefore, as a fact, that the Hindoo Rajah, though free from all direct controul, found himself generally restrained, by the force of public opinion, from abusing his power. Such, at least, is the view of the matter handed down to us by the first European writers who made India the subject of their inquiries;* and the truth of their statement receives ample confirmation from universal tradition in India itself. There the Rajah of old is represented as sitting, like the first kings of the Hebrews, to hear complaints and decide causes, at the gate of his

* Strabo and Diodorus.

capital; into his own hands petitions were thrust as he rode through the streets, and if he did not always examine them in person, the practice sufficiently implies that he was expected to do so. Nor is this all. Whatever the temper of the reigning prince might be, its effects could seldom extend far beyond the immediate vicinity of his dwelling; for in their local institutions the people at large possessed a sure defence against tyranny; and the continuance of these institutions, in a greater or less degree of vigour, throughout the long night of anarchy which darkened the decline of the native rule, supplies abundant proof that they were not found useless in time of need.

To assist the sovereign in discharging the duties of his office, he is required to surround himself "with Pundits learned in the Beeds and Shasters, who are also men skilful in the works of piety, and who employ themselves in worthy actions, and who are men of compassion and clemency, and of an exalted family, and acquainted with all business, and who know the excellencies and blemishes of each particular caste." How far this law was obeyed to its letter in every thing we know not, but we are informed by Sir John Malcolm, that the Mahratta chiefs of Central India, "who preserve the plain habits of the nation," follow its dictates with wonderful minuteness to this day. These have their Dewans, or Prime Ministers, invested with the superintendence of every department; their Furnevese, or Minister of Finance; their Mozumdar, or Chief Register; their Chitnavese, or Secretary of State;* their Siccanavese, or Keeper

* Who conducts all public correspondence.

of the Seal; their Potanavese, or Treasurer; and their Dufturdar, or Keeper of State Papers. All these, it will be seen, correspond in some measure with the functionaries of whom we have already spoken, as presiding over departments, districts, and villages; and all have at their command establishments of clerks and writers. Thus one uniform system is traced in the administration of affairs, extending from the capital to the remotest village, and a chain of responsibility is woven which embraces every functionary from the king down to the village Potail.*

Under these simple—we had almost said patriarchal arrangements—the natives of Hindostan appear to have lived, from the earliest down to comparatively speaking late times, if not free from the troubles and annoyances to which men in all conditions of society are more or less subject, still in the full enjoyment each individual of his property, and of a very considerable share of

* We have not noticed, in our sketch of the primitive institutions of Hindostan, those mighty empires which are said from time to time to have arisen, as we doubt, at least to a certain extent, the truth of the assertion. There seem at all times to have flourished three or four warlike princes, who brought their less powerful neighbours into subjection; but there is no reason to believe that their Maha-Rajas, or Great Kings, ever interfered with the internal governments of the lesser princes. On the contrary, though they imposed a tribute upon them, and required them to furnish troops as often as necessity required, they left every part of domestic detail to be conducted according to ancient usage. Besides, these great empires were continually in a state of fluctuation, the sceptre passing from hand to hand, according to the vigour or the weakness of successive administrations.

personal liberty. It is true that institutions such as have just been described, tend, in no degree, to nurture those high aspirations which carry men continually forward in the scale of rational beings. There were but few inducements held out to the Hindoo to aim at the acquisition of more than an ordinary degree of knowledge; for let his acquirements be what they might, his destiny was fixed by a power, which he was led to believe could neither be resisted nor evaded. In whatever walk of life his fathers moved in the same he must move also; and hence few, if any, dreamed, except under very peculiar circumstances, of deviating, in the slightest degree, from established usages. But this, though unquestionably an evil, was not without its countervailing advantages. If the prime spur to exertion was taken away, the grand inducements to restlessness and sedition were also effectually removed; and men lived quietly and submissively to the laws, because they were impressed with a notion that to do otherwise was absolutely impossible.

Again, a striking, and to a certain extent at least a mischievous effect of the village system of Hindostan, was to stifle altogether that love of country which we are accustomed to dignify with the appellation of patriotism. Leave him in possession of the farm which his forefathers owned, and preserve entire the institutions to which he had from infancy been accustomed; and the simple Hindoo would give himself no concern whatever as to the intrigues and cabals which took place at the capital. Dynasties might displace one another; revolutions might occur; and the persons of his

sovereigns might change every day: but so long as his own little society remained undisturbed, all other contingencies were to him subjects scarcely of speculation. To this, indeed, more than to any other cause, is to be ascribed the facility with which one conqueror after another has overrun different parts of India; which submitted, not so much because its inhabitants were wanting in courage, as because to the great majority among them it signified nothing by whom the reins of the supreme government were held.

A third consequence of the village system has been one which men will naturally regard as advantageous, or the reverse, according to the opinions which they hold touching certain abstract points into which it is not necessary to enter here. Perhaps there are not to be found on the face of the earth a race of human beings whose attachment to their native place will bear a comparison with that of the Hindoos. There are no privations which the Hindoo will hesitate to bear rather than voluntarily abandon the spot where he was born; and if continued oppression drive him forth, he will return to it again, after long years of exile, with fresh fondness. No doubt this excessive partiality to place is not without its effect in producing the extreme submissiveness of character which belongs to the native of India. Let his rulers impose upon him what exactions they may, the Ryet, or cultivator, will never cease to make exertions to meet them: instigated all the while by the apprehension that if he fail in his payments his lands may be made over to another. But it is equally certain, that from it arise many of those

amiable and gentle qualities, which, in a striking degree, belong to the agricultural population of Hindostan; and which, when properly fostered by rulers acquainted with the native character, go far to supply the place of loyalty and veneration for the supreme government.

In strict accordance with the spirit of its civil institutions was the tendency of that religion which, whether the original growth of the country, or imported from some foreign land, appears at a very early period to have been generally professed throughout Hindostan. Shrouded behind a veil of mystery, which none except the Brahmins were permitted to withdraw, it was the main design of that extraordinary superstition to depress every movement of ambition or enterprise, by engendering a belief in the immutability of men's destinies, and keeping them continually dependent for intellectual instruction upon the priests. With this view the doctrine was promulgated, that every arrangement of social life was affected by direct interference on the part of the Deity. By him were the laws enacted, the government established, and the people distributed into different classes. By his command it came about that for every stage of life, from the cradle to the grave,—for every hour of the day, — for every function of nature,—for every transaction between man and man, a number of religious observances were prescribed; whilst meditation upon his incomprehensible attributes, as it was by far the most difficult of human operations, so was it that glorious occupation which alone prepared the intense votary for the enjoyment of the Divine Presence. Thus

was a spirit of stoical indifference to all earthly things, beyond the range of their immediate wants, carefully nurtured among the members of each of the inferior castes,—by the very same means which hindered them from seeking to pry too closely into matters connected, or supposed to be connected, with futurity.

The consequence of all this has been to create among the Hindoos a marked peculiarity of national character, into which neither the lapse of ages, nor an intimate communication with other tribes, has succeeded in introducing any material innovation. What the Hindoos are now, they appear ever to have been since first they made their way beyond the Himalaya mountains; and till the influence of their religion shall cease to be acknowledged, they will, probably, so continue. But it is time to close this somewhat dry discussion, that we may proceed with what more immediately concerns us, the narrative of that striking chain of events, which rendered them subject, first to a race of Tartar chiefs, and ultimately to the Crown of Great Britain.*

* We have abstained from all attempt at a compendious view either of the mythology or religious tenets of the Brahminists. The former would lead us into a labyrinth, where nothing would be found worthy of the toil endured in threading it: the latter has been too often elucidated already to require farther explanation here. There can be no doubt that the doctrine of the Metempsychosis is taught in the sacred books of the Hindoos; and that upon it is founded the code of morals, such as it is, to which the worshippers of Brahma are required to pay obedience.

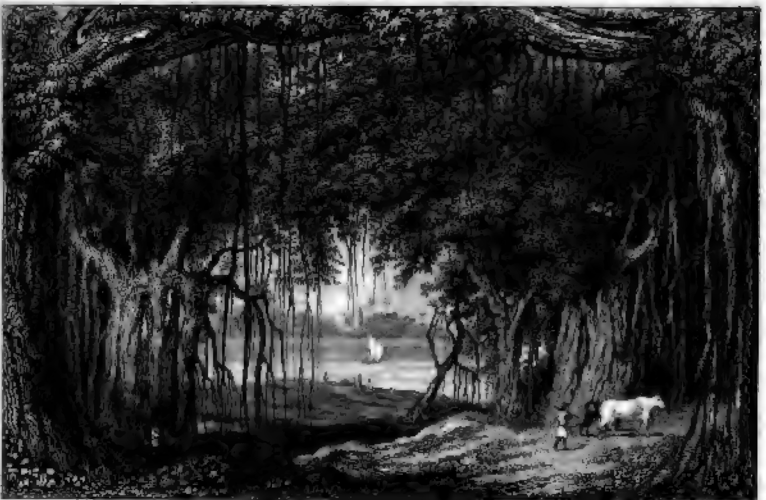
CHAPTER II.

Early Intercourse of the Hindoos with the Western Nations—Conquests of the Scythians, the Persians, and the Greeks—The Commerce of the Hindoos—Rise of the Turks into Power—The Origin of the Ghiznivides—Their Conquests in Hindostan—End of the Dynasty.

In spite of the extravagances which disfigure the annals of Hindostan, there is good ground to believe, that in a state of society similar to that described in the preceding chapter, its inhabitants lived during many centuries. That they were in the enjoyment all the while of the blessing of profound peace, it were in the highest degree absurd to imagine. Their own legends, on the contrary, speak of wars, and revolutions, and disorders of every kind, as occurring at least as frequently among them as elsewhere; and as human nature is, under every modification of climate and circumstances, essentially the same, we have no right to refuse our credence to such declarations. It is from the details of circumstances attending particular movements that we are alone justified in withholding our belief; the general assertions are too well borne out by universal experience to be denied or even distrusted.

It would appear, moreover, that the people of Hindostan were not only engaged in frequent contests among themselves, but that they have at all times been subject to incursions, and at least to partial conquests, from the nations contiguous to them on the north-west. We are told by Justin, that the Scythians, or rude tribes, inhabiting the east of Persia, overran a large portion of Asia, and penetrated as far as Egypt, long before the foundations of the Assyrian empire were laid. The same Justin, supported by the authority of Xenophon, informs us, that "Cyrus, having reduced Asia and the East in general, carried war into Scythia;" whilst from Herodotus we learn, that within the empire of Darius Hystaspes so much of India was included as to constitute one of the most valuable of his twenty satrapies. Of the exact extent of that satrapy, it is true that the Greek historian leaves us in doubt; but Major Rennel, with great show of reason, supposes that it may have reached as far as Delhi; and that it comprehended the whole of the Punjaub, or country watered by the five branches of the Indus, together with Cabul, Candahar, and the districts which lie along the Indus to the sea.

About one hundred and sixty years after the reign of Darius Hystaspes, Alexander the Great undertook his celebrated expedition into India. A variety of causes are assigned for that movement, one of which alleges, that the Indians, taking advantage of the unsettled state of the Persian monarchy, refused to pay to Alexander, as they had previously refused to Codomannus, the tribute



Drawn by W. Westall A.R.A. Engraved by E Finden

imposed upon them by Darius. There is probably some truth in this legend, though it may be very fairly questioned whether a prince of Alexander's disposition stood in need of any such direct provocation to tempt him towards a region, of the wealth of which he entertained an extravagant idea. The consciousness that he was master of the provinces adjoining to Hindostan, was probably sufficient to carry his ambitious desires into Hindostan itself; and of that which Alexander once entertained a desire, he rarely hesitated to aim at the accomplishment. But the success which attended the great conqueror on this occasion, fell as far short of his own wishes, as the resistance offered by the native tribes exceeded his expectations. Instead of annexing the whole of India to the empire, he failed to penetrate even to the furthest point attained by Darius; for, after subduing Porus, and receiving the submission of his allies, his further progress was arrested on the Hyphasis, the last of the five branches of the Indus, by the well known mutiny of his own troops. It is deeply to be regretted, in every point of view, that the case was so; for it is to this incursion, limited as it was in respect both of time and extent, that we are indebted for much of the information which we possess, touching the habits of the ancient Hindoos.

Alexander is represented by the Greek historians to have behaved with extraordinary magnanimity towards the Indian princes who submitted to him, and their singularly peaceable deportment during the season of anarchy which followed his demise, gives great show of plausibility to the statement. Whilst the Macedonian generals were contending

for sovereignty among themselves, neither Porus nor Taxiles raised the standard of revolt, but submitted quietly both to Pytho, the son of Agenor, and to Seleucus, who successively obtained dominion over Upper Asia. But Seleucus, who possessed much of his master's energy of character, and entertained high ideas of the benefits to be derived from a commercial intercourse with the interior, was not content to retain, without endeavouring to augment, the conquests already effected in India. Taking advantage of some hostile demonstrations on the part of Sandracottos, the sovereign of the Prasii, he waged with him an aggressive and successful war, and was hindered from utterly subduing him only by the necessity imposed upon himself of returning to check the progress of Antigonus in another part of his dominions. Seleucus concluded a treaty with Sandracottos, which left the latter in undisputed possession of his realm; nor were any future attempts made by the Græco-Syrian monarchs to establish an extensive sovereignty over India.

It has been stated in another place, that during the reign of Seleucus, Megasthenes visited Palebothra, the capital of the empire of the Practii, where he resided several years in the capacity of envoy. A similar duty was discharged by Daimachus, who sojourned at the court of Allitrochidas, the son and successor of Sandracottos. But the diplomatic missions of these officers are the last transactions of any importance which the Syrian monarchs appear to have held with India. Of the exact time and the exact manner in which their possessions were wrested from them, it is indeed

impossible to speak with confidence; but the probability is, that they were compelled to abandon India soon after the death of Seleucus, which event befel within two-and-forty years from the demise of Alexander.

At the very moment when the great monarchs of Syria were thus denuded of their Indian provinces, a smaller Greek kingdom began to arise out of the fragments of Alexander's empire, which still maintained an intimate intercourse with India, and soon made considerable acquisitions of territory there. The kingdom to which we allude was that of Bactria, originally subject to Seleucus, but wrested from his son or grandson, and rendered an independent state about twenty-seven years after his death. Dwelling close to the confines of India, from which indeed they were separated only by that range of mountains in which the Indus and the Oxus take their rise, it was but natural that the inhabitants of Bactria, as soon as they had cast off the Syrian yoke, should turn their arms against their more effeminate neighbours; and their success appears to have been in proportion to the courage and hardihood with which they adventured from one enterprise to another. How far their conquests were pushed, or by what limits their monarchy was ultimately circumscribed, we possess no means accurately to state. All that is known on these heads is, that their power extended very considerably into the interior; and that it continued unshaken, till an irresistible horde of Tartars, pushed from their native seats on the confines of China, and compelled to move towards the west by the pressure of a more numerous body in their

rear, passed the Jaxartes, and in the year before Christ 126 burst upon Bactria, overwhelming the Grecian monarchy after it had subsisted for the space of nearly 130 years.

From this date, down to the year 1001, when Mahmood the founder of the Ghiznividian dynasty first began to aim at conquests among them, the Hindoos east of the Indus appear to have dwelt secure, under the governments of their native princes. Unaffected by the endless revolutions to which not Europe alone, but other parts of Asia were subject, they were known to the rest of the world, throughout a space of 1100 years, as a commercial people only; and so highly was their trade valued, that the most polished nations of both hemispheres vied with each other in their efforts to secure even a portion of it.

There were at this period two principal outlets, by means of which the people of Hindostan were accustomed to transmit the productions of their soil and ingenuity to other nations. Of these, by far the most important was Egypt, a country which the sagacity of Alexander had early destined to be the main channel of communication between Europe and India, and to which the judicious arrangements of his successors speedily secured a monopoly of that portion of the trade which was carried on by sea. Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, as soon as he took possession of Egypt, established the seat of his government at Alexandria. By some exertion of authority and many acts of liberality, but chiefly by the fame of his mild and equitable administration, he drew such a number of inhabitants to this favourite residence, that it soon became a populous

and wealthy city. "As Ptolemy deserved and had possessed," says Dr. Robertson, "the confidence of Alexander more perfectly than any of his officers, he knew well that his chief object in founding Alexandria was to secure the advantages arising from the trade with India." A long and prosperous reign was favourable to the prosecution of that object, and though ancient authors have not enabled us to trace the steps which the first Ptolemy took for this purpose, we have a striking evidence of his extraordinary attention to naval affairs, in his erecting a light-house on the island of Pharos, at the mouth of the harbour of Alexandria, a work of such magnificence as to be esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world.

With respect to the commercial arrangements of his son, we are in possession of more perfect information. In order to bring the trade with India (which began to revive at its ancient station Tyre,*) to centre in Alexandria, he applied himself to the formation of a canal, which, measuring an hundred cubits in breadth, and thirty cubits in depth, was intended to connect Arsinoe on the Red Sea, not far from the situation of the modern Suez, with the Peleusica or eastern branch of the Nile. By means of that canal, goods might, it was presumed, be conveyed wholly by water to the capital. But either on account of some danger apprehended from completing it, the work was never finished; or from the slow and dangerous navigation towards

* The Hindoos are supposed to have carried on a great deal of commercial intercourse with the Tyrians, in times long anterior to the building of Carthage.

the northern extremity of the Red Sea, it was found to be of so little use that other measures were of necessity adopted. Ptolemy now built a city on the west coast of the Red Sea, to which he gave the name of Berenice. It soon became the emporium of the trade with India; and that great object being attained, all minor difficulties disappeared under the exertions of a powerful and despotic monarch. Ptolemy caused the desert between Berenice and Coptos to be diligently surveyed, and wherever springs were discovered he built inns or caravansaries for the accommodation of travellers. By this means it became, comparatively speaking, easy to transport goods overland to the latter place; and as a canal of three miles in extent communicated between it and the Nile, they passed without further trouble down the stream of that river to Alexandria. Through this channel the intercourse between the west and the east continued to be carried on during the two hundred and fifty years that Egypt remained an independent kingdom.

The second outlet open to the merchants of Hindostan led into Persia, and was, as may be imagined, in every respect less advantageous than the preceding. Unaccustomed or disinclined to undertake adventures by sea, the Persians contented themselves with transporting on camels such commodities as they chiefly valued, from the banks of the Indus to the Oxus, down the stream of which they were carried to the Caspian, and distributed partly by land-carriage, partly by navigable rivers, through the different countries between the Caspian and the Euxine sea. The

commodities, again, intended for the southern and interior provinces, proceeded by land from the Caspian gates to some of the great rivers, by which they were circulated through every part of the country. Such was the ancient mode of intercourse between India and Persia, while the latter empire was governed by its native princes; and so great is the force of habit, that it continued to be practised long after the inconveniences attending it were both felt and acknowledged.

Neither the downfal of the Roman power, nor the earlier successes of the followers of Mahomet, produced any material alteration in the intercourse thus established between the Hindoos and the rest of mankind. The Romans, satisfied to enjoy the commerce of the East, made no efforts to subdue it; and the barbarous hordes which interposed between them and the frontiers of Hindostan, were too much occupied in harassing one another, to direct their attention elsewhere. In like manner, when the conquests of Alexander, and the kingdoms of Seleucus and Ptolemy first yielded to the valour of a rude Arabian soldiery, no other change took place than was occasioned by the transfer of the Indian trade to merchants professing the faith of Mahomet. Bassora became now not less than Alexandria—an emporium of Indian commerce; but no attempt seems to have been made to carry the banner of the prophet beyond the Indus. The military virtue of the Arabians, however, no sooner began to sink under the pleasures which spring from the possession of power, than the Caliphs adopted a method to restore it, of which, rather because of its con-

nection with Indian history, than on account of the effect which it produced at home, it will be necessary to give some account.

At the equal distance of two thousand miles from the Caspian, the Icy, the Chinese, and the Bengal seas, a ridge of mountains is conspicuous, which, in the language of different nations, has been styled Imaus, and Caf, and Altai, and the Golden Mountains, and the Girdle of the World. Among these mountains dwelt, in a state of abject slavery to the great Khan of Geougen, a Tartar tribe called Turks, whose business it was to extract iron ore from the bowels of the earth, and to work it at their forges into implements of war. Robust in their persons, and accustomed to every kind of hardship, it needed but the voice of some daring leader to raise these men from a state of obscurity, and as they found one in the person of Bertezena, their servitude was speedily converted into sovereignty. They not only overthrew the forces of the Geougen, but rapidly extended their conquests on all hands, till their supremacy was acknowledged over a large portion of Tartary in Asia.

The Turks had risen to considerable eminence when the government of the Caliphs began to decline; and in an evil hour the latter invited adventurers from among them to take service in the Arabian armies. The Turks came; they were caressed and flattered; they formed the body guard of the sovereign, and their chiefs were advanced to numerous places of dignity. It would have been contrary to the ordinary course of events had they failed to abuse their influence. In process of time the Emperor of the Faithful became a

mere puppet in the hands of his guards, and the Turkish governors of provinces threw off, one by one, all beyond nominal allegiance to their master. The first who attempted to usurp supreme power was Taher, Governor of Khorassan, a province extending from the Caspian sea to the Oxus; he was successful, and he and his posterity, under the appellation of Taherites, enjoyed sovereignty there from the year 813 to 872. The dynasty of the Taherites was then supplanted by one Soffer, the son of a brazier, who, after rising, according to Oriental fashion, through the different stages of military adventure, obtained the command of an army which enabled him to dethrone his prince. But the Sofferides, after extending their sway over Transoxiana, as well as over Khorassan, were, within a generation or two, set aside in their turn by the Samanides, a race of adventurers as desperate as themselves, though more just and prudent in their general conduct. The Samanides governed the whole extent of country which lies between the Jaxartes and the Indus; of which they retained the sovereignty, with much honour to themselves, till about the year 1000.

While these usurpations went on among the provinces on the east of Persia, those extending to the westward, from Khorassan along the shores of the Caspian sea, were in like manner erected into an independent state, by three brothers, called after the name of their father, the Bowides. This dynasty, which began about the year 927, consisted of seventeen princes, who reigned in succession till the middle of the eleventh century, and their power was acknowledged throughout the provinces of

Gelan, Mosenderan, Erak, Fars, Kerman, Khosistan, Ahroz, Tabaristan, and Georgia.

The Samanides had swayed the sceptre about ninety years, when events befel which paved the way for another of those revolutions which so frequently disfigure the page of eastern history. It chanced that Abdool Mullik Samany dying, left behind him one son, whose extreme youth caused the nobles to differ among themselves whether it would be prudent to place him on the throne of his father. In this emergency they sent to consult Aluptugeen, the governor of Khorassan, a man of great abilities, of high reputation, and well known to have been in the confidence of his deceased sovereign. Aluptugeen gave it as his opinion that the prince Munsoor was too young for so weighty a charge, and recommended that his uncle should govern in his room, till he himself had arrived at years of discretion. Unfortunately, however, the nobles, though they thought fit to request advice, did not consider themselves bound to wait till it had been afforded, but placed Munsoor upon the throne just in time for him to learn that the governor of Khorassan was opposed to his elevation. The consequence was, a peremptory order, on his part, that Aluptugeen should return immediately to court; while the latter, well aware of the consequences that were likely to follow, refused to obey. A sort of civil war ensued, in which Munsoor's armies received two decisive defeats, and in the year 962, Aluptugeen, having reduced Ghisny, erected it into the capital of a distinct though a feudatory kingdom.

There served under the command of Aluptu-

geen an individual named Subuktoogeen, or Subuctagee, an individual whose career was altogether as extraordinary as that of any other adventurer, even in that region of adventure, the East. Born in Toorkistan, and conveyed as a slave to Bokhara, he was purchased when a boy by the future King of Ghisny, who, perceiving him to be possessed of talents of a high order, furnished him with numerous opportunities of exercising them. The consequence was, that Subuctagee rose rapidly to the command of an army, with which he largely contributed to establish his patron's independence; and, strange to say, he never ceased to act, both towards Aluptugeen and his family, with the most scrupulous fidelity. He not only served Aluptugeen while he lived, but at his death became a wise and just protector to his son, whose excesses, however, cut short his days, and left the throne of Ghisny without an occupant.

It was now for the first time that the Turkish slave permitted visions of royalty to pass before his eyes. The feelings of the people were favourable to him; for his abilities were well known and justly appreciated; he, therefore, married the daughter of Aluptugeen, and ascended the throne. Nor was any opposition made to the arrangement by Munsoor, to whom, as Emperor of Transoxiana, the sovereign of Ghisny still owed feudal service; indeed, the good understanding between them appears to have been such, that it was principally through the support of Subuctagee that Noo, the son and successor of Munsoor, was enabled to withstand a formidable conspiracy raised against him elsewhere. But it is not because of these facts

in his history that Subuctagee deserves the notice which we have now bestowed upon him. He was the first Mahommedan sovereign who turned his arms against the worshippers of Brahma; and if he effected no permanent conquests himself, he at all events paved the way for those of his successors. He died at Toormooz, not far from Bulkh, A. D. 997, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and twenty-first of his reign.

Subuctagee left behind him two sons, Mahmood and Ismael, the elder of whom, sharing in all his father's expeditions, had exhibited numerous proofs of capacity, but as he happened to be at a distance at the moment when his father expired, the crown was immediately seized by Ismael, the younger. A brief and not a very sanguinary struggle ensued, which ended, as justice required, in favour of Mahmood, who spared his brother's life indeed, but shut him up close prisoner in a castle, where chagrin and want of free exercise soon cut him off. Mahmood's ambition, however, was too great to be satisfied with the possession of a secondary throne. He no sooner found himself without a rival in Ghisny, than he sought an opportunity of quarrelling with his feudal superior, and the latter falling a victim to domestic treachery soon after the struggle began, Mahmood at once possessed himself of the empire. His next measure was to reduce the power of the Bowides to a shadow, and to bring under his own authority all the regions between the Tigris and the Jaxartes; after which, to use the language of the Persian historian, "he turned his face towards India."

The internal condition of Hindostan Proper,

extending as far as the Brahmaputra to the east, and the Nerbudda to the south, was at that time particularly favourable to the ambitious projects of Mahmood. Instead of a single emperor, or even two or three emperors, it supported at least as many independent rajahs as there were in after-times scattered over it viceroys to the Mogul; nor does there appear to have subsisted among them any bond of union more lasting than caprice or some sudden emergency might from time to time create. The power of many of these princes seems indeed to have been far from contemptible; and the resistance which their troops offered to the hardy warriors of the west, did them honour; but attacked, as they were, in detail, they proved quite incapable of resisting the torrent thus unexpectedly let loose upon them. One by one they were defeated, their towns plundered, and their countries laid under contribution, whilst the cruelties exercised upon their subjects, under the sanction of religious zeal, were too horrible to be repeated.

The first Hindoo monarch that felt the weight of the Mussulman arms was Jeipal, the sovereign of Lahore, whose territory composed that portion of the Punjaub which extends from Cashmere to Moultan. He had been previously defeated by Subuctagee in one of those predatory excursions which that daring leader made across the Indus: and he was now totally overthrown at Pishawur, five thousand of his troops being slain, and himself taken prisoner. Mahmood failed not to make the most of his victory. Marching from Pishawur, he reduced a number of fortresses, and among others, the castle of Bitunda, till in the end Jeipal

was glad to recover his freedom by consenting to hold his crown as a tributary to Mahmood. But according to Ferishta, "a custom in those days prevailed among the Hindoos, that whatever rajah was twice overpowered by strangers became disqualified to reign. Jeipal, in compliance with this custom, resigned his crown to his son Anundpal, and having ordered a funeral pile to be prepared, he set fire to it with his own hands, and perished therein."* Having settled these matters, and collected an immense booty, Mahmood returned to Ghizny; but in the year 1004, we find him again engaged in hostilities with Anundpal, who, supported by the king of Moultan, had thrown off the yoke. Complete success once more attended his efforts. Anundpal, being defeated in a sanguinary action, which was fought among the passes of the mountains, abandoned Lahore, and took refuge in Cashmere, whilst the king of Moultan was glad to sue for that pardon which the state of affairs in another part of his empire rendered Mahmood well disposed to grant. He accordingly constituted Sab Sais, a convert from Hindooism, his deputy in India, and hastened back to repell a horde of wild Tartars, who had broken in upon his northern provinces.

The emperor had scarcely withdrawn, when Sab Sais, returning to the faith of his fathers, raised the standard of revolt. He was induced to take this step by assurances of support from Anundpal, as well as by a report that other rajahs were prepared to unite their arms with his; but ere the troops of the allies could assemble, Mahmood burst into

* See Briggs's History of the Mahommedan Power in India, vol. i. p. 38.

Lahore, and surprised and took prisoner Sab Sais himself. No further movements seem to have been made this season either by Anundpal or his friends; and the emperor, after appointing another deputy, once more fell back upon Ghizny. But with the return of spring, came a rumour of hostile demonstrations, which for the third time drew Mahmood across the Indus. He was opposed on this occasion by the combined armies of the sovereigns of Oogein, Gualior, Callenger, Kanoge, Delhi, and Ajmere, which, as well as a band of Gwickers or Gickers, he totally routed; chiefly, if we may believe Ferishta, in consequence of the panic occasioned among the elephants of the allies, by the use of certain fire-balls. Twenty thousand Hindoos perished in this battle and in the pursuit; and the booty found in their camp is said to have been immense.

Mahmood followed up his first success with the vigour and activity which were characteristic of him. He marched against the people of Nagracote, besieged and took their fortresses, broke down their temples and destroyed their idols, and returned, as he had done before, loaded with plunder to his capital of Ghizny.

In this manner Mahmood conducted himself, making almost every year fresh inroads into Hindostan, no inconsiderable portion of which he brought into a species of dependence upon the crown of Ghizny. Towards the east, his conquests extended as far as the Ganges; towards the north, his authority was acknowledged in Cashmere; whilst southward, he penetrated into Guzerat, where he besieged and took by assault the celebrated castle of Sumnaut. It is worthy of remark

however, that in all his expeditions, Mahmood seems to have aimed more at the acquisition of plunder, and the propagation of the Mahommedan faith, than at the consolidation of a great empire. It is true, that he reduced many rajahs to the condition of tributaries, and that in a few instances he deposed the native princes altogether, setting up governors of his own choosing in their room; but he himself continually withdrew, as soon as some definite object was gained, to enjoy the fruits of his victories at Ghizny. It is reported of him, moreover, by his countryman and admirer Ferishta, that the anxiety to root out idolatry was at all times more influential with him than the lust of conquest or the love of wealth. No temporal advantage, in short, nor the prospect of any, ever operated to check the ardour of his zeal for the honour of his faith; and the following account of his mode of acting, after the capture of Sumnaut, will serve to show that his panegyrist does not speak of him in other besides the language of truth.

"Having placed guards round the walls and at the gates," says Ferishta, "Mahmood entered Sumnaut, accompanied by his sons and a few of his nobles and principal attendants. On approaching the temple he saw a superb edifice built of hewn stone. Its lofty roof was supported by fifty-six pillars, curiously carved and set with precious stones. In the centre of the hall was Somnat, a stone idol, five yards in height, two of which were sunk in the ground. The king approaching the image raised his mace, and struck off its nose. He ordered two pieces of the idol to be broken off and sent to Ghizny, that one might be thrown at

the threshold of the public mosque, and the other at the court-door of his own palace. These identical fragments are to this day (now six hundred years ago) to be seen at Ghizny. Two more fragments were reserved to be sent to Mecca and Medina. It is a well-authenticated fact, that when Mahmood was thus employed in destroying this idol, a crowd of Brahmins petitioned his attendants, and offered a quantity of gold if the king would desist from further mutilation. His officers endeavoured to persuade him to accept of the money; for they said that breaking one idol would not do away with idolatry altogether; that therefore it could serve no purpose to destroy the image entirely; but that such a sum of money, given in charity among true believers, would be a meritorious act. The king acknowledged that there might be reason in what they said; but replied, that if he should consent to such a measure, his name would be handed down to posterity as 'Mahmood the idol-seller:' whereas he was desirous of being known as 'Mahmood the idol-destroyer;' he therefore directed the troops to proceed in their work. The next blow broke open the belly of Somnat, which was hollow, and discovered a quantity of diamonds, rubies, and pearls, of much greater value than the amount which the Brahmins had offered."

The same feeling which prompted him to break to pieces the idol at Sumnaut was the principal occasion of more than one of his most celebrated expeditions. He advanced to within thirty miles of Delhi, baffling a powerful confederacy of Rajas, solely that he might enjoy the satisfaction of plun-

dering the temple of Tahnesur; and he directed his fury against it chiefly because it held the same place in the estimation of the Hindoos, which Mecca holds in the estimation of the disciples of Mohammed. The consequence has been, that whilst Mohammedan writers apply to him epithets expressive only of unbounded applause, his memory is held in unmitigated abhorrence by the Brahmins; not so much on account of his success in the subjugation of their country, as on account of the extreme bigotry with which he waged war against their religion.

Mahmood breathed his last on the 29th of April, 1030, in the sixty-third year of his age, and was succeeded by Mohammed, his favourite, though the younger of his twin sons. Mohammed, however, being very inferior to his brother Musaood, both in talent and courage, failed in vindicating the usurpation of which he had been guilty. After a short reign of six months he was deposed, deprived of his sight, and cast into prison; and Musaood, the natural heir of Mahmood, mounted the throne in his place.

It is related of this prince, that "he was full of liberality and valour; that his arrow, after piercing the strongest mail, penetrated the hide of an elephant; and that his iron mace was so ponderous that no man of his time could raise it with one hand." Doubtless these qualities were not without their influence in securing for him the respect of a barbarous people; but he appears to have possessed other and better claims upon the veneration of his subjects. He was, according to the Persian accounts, strictly just, eager in his inquiries after

merit, and judicious in his mode of rewarding it—preferring to stations of trust only such men as gave evidence of their capability, and punishing treachery even when he was himself a gainer by it. Musaood caused three incursions to be made into Hindostan. The first, which occurred in 1032, and which he himself led in person, produced no result more memorable than the reduction of Sursutti, a fortress situated among the hills of Cashmere. It was carried by escalade, because Musaood had been given to understand that certain Mussulman merchants were in captivity there; and he divided no inconsiderable portion of the spoil among these prisoners as soon as they were released. The second, which took place in 1034, was commanded by one of his Hindoo dependents, and had for its object the reduction to obedience of Bun, another Indian chief, who had raised the standard of revolt. It was perfectly successful, as was also that in the year following, which Musaood conducted in person, and which penetrated as far as Hansy, the capital of Sewalik. Though esteemed by the natives to be impregnable, Hansy was won by escalade after a short siege of about six days' continuance; and, according to the custom of the times, the conquerors committed in it every excess. Musaood marched next upon Sonput, of which he obtained possession without opposition; and having thoroughly plundered it, advanced against the kingdom of one Ram Roy. But Ram, conscious of his own inability to withstand the coming storm, took the most effectual means to avert its violence, by largely bribing Musaood to return to Ghizny; and there was probably the less

disinclination on his part to fall in with the arrangement, that his presence at home was loudly called for.

During several centuries, the movements of the Toorkomans towards the west had caused numerous hordes of that singular race of men to press heavily upon the extremities of the Persian empire. In the reign of Mahmood, three brothers, the sons of one Seljook, solicited permission to pass the Oxus, and to occupy, with their flocks and herds, the unclaimed pastures of Khorassan. In defiance of the advice of his most prudent counsellors, Mahmood acceded to the request; and a door was opened to the further encroachments of the Tartars, of which they failed not to avail themselves. Tribe after tribe rolled onwards; and though the vigour of Mahmood's government, as well as his own personal character, restrained them, for a while, within the bounds of moderation, it needed but a relaxation of the one consequent upon the loss of the other, to produce, in this respect, a mighty change. Mahmood no sooner ceased to wield the sceptre than the strangers began to aspire at sovereignty; and complaints were reiterated to Musaood that the inhăbitants of Khorassan and Transoxiana were grievously oppressed. He immediately put himself at the head of an army, and marched to expel the intruders. But fortune declared against him. He was defeated in a great battle, stript of all the provinces between the Oxus and the Euphrates, and compelled to retreat into India, where he became the victim of a conspiracy among his own troops, which raised Mohammed, for the second time, to the throne. Musaood ended his

days in a fortress, whither his rival immediately conveyed him, being buried alive, according to current report, in the channel of an old well.

This execrable deed led the way to a series of revolutions and internal wars, which threatened to involve the Ghiznividian dynasty in utter destruction. Modood, the son of Musaood, burning with desire to avenge his father's wrongs, advanced at the head of a formidable force, and a great battle was fought between him and the adherents of Mohamed, at a place called Duntoor. It ended in Modood's favour, who caused his uncle, with his sons and principal adherents, to be put to death; after which he employed himself, first in the suppression of a formidable revolt, in which many Hindoo rajahs were implicated, and afterwards in conducting a sanguinary war against his own brother Madood. The latter was scarcely finished ere another and a not less alarming rebellion broke out, which it required all the activity of Modood to suppress, while the Suljook Tatars made continual inroads upon him, during one of which Ghizny itself suffered capture. Such was the state of the Ghiznividian empire, when, in the year 1049, Modood died, leaving a child of four years old to bear the brunt of no ordinary political tempest.

The young Sooltan enjoyed the honours of royalty but six days, when he was dethroned by his uncle Abul Hussan Ally, who in his turn gave place, within the short space of two years, to Sooltan Abool Rushed. The last-mentioned prince was a son of the great Mahmood, who, as frequently happens in eastern countries with the younger branches of a royal stock, spent most of

his early years in captivity. A curious tissue of events brought him at once from a prison to the throne. "Abdool Ruzak Bin Ahmud Bin Hussun Mymundy," says Ferishta, "was the minister of Sooltan Modood, and had actually collected a force to quell an insurrection in Seestan, when, hearing of the death of his master, he put off the object of his expedition, and halted at Tuckeeabad with his army. Here, in conjunction with Kwaja Abool Fuzl-Rushed the son of Altoon Tash, and Noshtugeen Hajeb Joorjy, in the latter end of the year 443, (1051,) Abdool Ruzak released the Prince Abdool Rushed, and placed him on the throne, according to his own statement, by the express command of the late Sultan Modood."

Sultan Rushed appears to have been well qualified to manage the affairs of the empire with address. He brought back to his allegiance Ally Bin Rubeea, whom the late confusions had induced to usurp the Ghiznivide conquests in India, and sending Noshtugeen Hajeb, now raised to the rank of an Ameer, against Nagracote, he recovered it from the rebel Hindoos, who, from Madood's time, had held it. But his end was not more fortunate than that of many of his predecessors. Toghrul Hajib, a military chief, in whom he reposed great confidence, after reducing Seestan to order, suddenly turned his arms against his master, and coming upon Rushed when unprepared to offer resistance, obtained possession of his person. The Sultan, as a matter of course, was with nine others of the blood royal put to death, and the traitor, after compelling a daughter of the late Sultan Musaood to become his wife, seized the

crown. But the death of Rushed went not long unavenged. Noshtugeen Hajib, rejecting with scorn the proffered friendship of the usurper, not only marched from Nagracote, for the purpose of dethroning him, but entered into a secret negociation with several of the Omrahs about his person. By their management Toghrul was put to death at the end of forty days from the date of his usurpation, and the Prince Furokhzad, one of Rushed's three surviving sons, was advanced to the throne, the choice being determined neither by seniority, nor the claims of merit, but by lot.

Furokhzad's reign extended over a space of six years, and was chiefly memorable for two bloody battles, which his troops sustained against those of the restless and ambitious Suljooks. The first, in which Noshtugeen Hajib commanded, ended in favour of the Ghiznivides; the second, in which Furokhzad himself was present, proved adverse to them; but that which force of arms might have failed to accomplish, the Sultan, by a politic display of liberality, obtained. By loading with presents, and then setting at liberty the prisoners which he had taken in the former action, Furokhzad impressed his rival, the King of the Suljooks, with such an idea of his munificence, that he too was induced to dismiss his captives, and a truce was concluded between the two states, which, during the remainder of this prince's reign, suffered no interruption.

Furokhzad died of a dysentery, and was succeeded by his brother Ibrahim, a monarch illustrious among his contemporaries, more perhaps, for piety and strict integrity, than for courage

or conduct. He swayed the sceptre upwards of forty years, during which he made frequent incursions into India, reducing to obedience many provinces which had not previously yielded to the Moslem arms. But if he added to the extent of the empire in one direction, he permitted large encroachments to be made upon it in another; for the Suljooks won from him district after district till little of the ancient patrimony of his house remained. To secure that little, however, he negociated a marriage between his son Musaood, and the daughter of Mullik Shah Suljooky; and as other alliances followed, he seems to have perfectly succeeded in his design.

Ibrahim left the crown to Musaood, who wore it "without domestic troubles or foreign wars" for sixteen years. A few additional conquests were indeed made under him by Hajib Toghantugeen, Governor of Lahore, who crossed the Ganges, and, according to Ferishta, "carried his arms farther than any Mussulman had hitherto done, except the Emperor Mahmood." But the most memorable event in his reign was the removal of the seat of government to Lahore, a measure which the incessant encroachments of the Suljooks induced this timid prince to adopt. Musaood died in peace in the latter end of the year 508 (1118), and was succeeded by his son Kumal-ood Dowla Sheernijad.

An act of assassination, perpetrated with extreme hardihood, ended at once the life and the reign of this prince, after he had swayed the sceptre something less than a year. He was succeeded by Arslan his brother, not less than his murderer, whose first measure was to thrust into close con-

finement as many members of the royal family as fell into his hands; but one of these, called indifferently Byram, Beiram, and Bahram, eluding the vigilance of the tyrant, escaped into Persia. His cause was immediately espoused by the Sultan Sunjur Suljooky, his uncle, who led a formidable army against Arslan; and, after a sanguinary action, defeated and drove him from the throne. Arslan, however, though a tyrant and an usurper, seems not to have been deficient in either personal courage or activity. He made a desperate effort to recover the crown as soon as the return of the Persian troops into their own country was communicated to him: but here also he failed, and falling, in the end, into the hands of Byram, he suffered the punishment which his crimes deserved.

From the language which the Persian historians employ, when speaking of Sultan Byram, it would appear that his talents were better calculated to ensure for him respect in private than in public life. Of a frank and generous temper, and "having an uncommon thirst for knowledge, he is said to have been a great promoter of literature, and he proved himself a liberal patron of learned men," by supporting many of them at his court. For a while, however, the state of his affairs was exceedingly prosperous. The Suljooks, declining in power, no longer harassed him with inroads, a circumstance which enabled him to fix his residence at the ancient capital of the empire; and the better to secure himself against the machinations of his tributaries, he gave his daughter in marriage to Koobt-ood-Deen Mahomed, the most restless of the princes of Goor. But an empire constituted

like that of Ghizny is never secure from commotion, and at the very moment when he was thus providing for its integrity in the west, the east was in open rebellion. Mohamed Bhyleem, Governor of Lahore under Arslan, raised the standard of revolt, and it required two campaigns, in both of which the Sultan personally served, to reduce this province to obedience.

In the meanwhile his son-in-law, Koobt-ood-Deen Mahomed, encouraged by Byram's absence in Lahore, began to devise plans for the transfer of the crown of Ghizny to his own head. With this view he assumed the dignity and consequence of an independent sovereign at Feroozkoob, a measure which soon drew around his standard crowds of daring spirits from all quarters; and he was already prepared to lead them against Ghizny, when Byram, by an act of treachery, arrested the movement. Having prevailed upon Mahomed to arrange their differences in a personal interview, he artfully inveigled him into his power, and after upbraiding him with his treachery, compelled him to swallow poison. Thus died Kootb-ood-Deen, otherwise called King of the Mountains, and thus began that deadly feud between the houses of Ghizny and Goor, which ended in the total ruin of the former dynasty.

There accompanied Mahomed on this occasion, one of his brothers, named Seif-ood-Deen Goory, who narrowly escaped the snare laid for him also, and fled to Feroozkoob. He put himself instantly at the head of an army, and, marching upon Ghizny, took possession of it, whilst Byram, unable to offer any effectual resistance, fled into India. Here he re-

mained quiet, waiting till a favourable opportunity should offer again to try the fortune of war; and the return of winter brought with it the opening which he sought. It was then that Seif-ood-Deen, too confident in the forced protestations of the Ghiznidians, dismissed the greater number of the Goor troops, in order that he might maintain his brother, Alla-ood-Deen, in the government of Feroozkoob. This was no sooner communicated to Byram than he advanced upon Ghizny, within the walls of which he had every reason to believe that a strong party favoured him; and when Seif-ood-Deen sallied forth to meet him, he was immediately surrounded and seized by conspirators. In the spirit of the times Byram put his rival to death with circumstances of peculiar insult; but the triumph thus gained, and thus shamefully abused, he was not long permitted to enjoy. Alla-ood-Deen still survived to avenge the indignities put upon his race. He came down into the plains at the head of an irresistible army, overthrew the forces of Byram in a pitched battle, and compelled him again to take refuge behind the Indus, where, though only in the 35th year of his age, he died soon after of a broken heart.

The empire, shorn of almost all its ancient provinces, now devolved upon Sultan Khoosrow the First, who, if we except a single ineffectual attempt to recover Ghizny, spent his days in peace. He was succeeded, after a reign of six years, by his son Khoosrow the Second, a prince even more unfortunate than his predecessors. He was the last of the Ghiznivides that sat upon the Indian throne. " In his time," says Ferishta, " Shahab-ood-Deen

Mahomed Goory, the brother of Alla-ood-Deen, marched an army into India, overrunning the provinces of Pishawur, Afghanistan, Moultan, and the Indus;" and though the strong fortress of Lahore more than once withstood his fury, even it yielded in the end to the combined force of valour and treason. The last-mentioned event occurred in the year 1186, when Khoosrow, falling into the hands of his enemies, the dynasty of the Ghiznivides became extinct.

CHAPTER III.

Accession of the House of Goor—Mahomed—Cuttub—Aram—Altmish — Feroze — Sultana Ruzeea Begum Beiram—Musaood—Mahmood—Bulbun—Keikobad.

The race which now ascended the Indian throne, are described by Ferishta as deriving their descent from one of the earliest of the fabulous monarchs of Persia. " Historians relate," says he, " that about the time when Fureedoon subdued Zohak Morry,* two brothers, descended from the latter, (Soory and Sam,) were in the service of the former prince. Having incurred his displeasure, they fled with a party of their friends to Nehawund, where they took up their abode, and possessed themselves of a small territory. Soory became the chief of a tribe, and Sam his general. Soory gave his daughter in marriage to his nephew Shoojaa, the son of Sam. But his enemies traduced him to his uncle, who, inflamed with jealousy and hatred, wished to take away his daughter from him. Shoojaa discovering this, fled in the night with ten horsemen, and a few camels laden with his effects, accompanied by his wife and children, to the mountains of Goor, where he built a castle, and called it Zoomyandish. Here he was gradually joined by many of his friends, and long maintained his post against Fur-

* An imaginary personage.

eedoon, but was eventually obliged to submit and to pay him tribute."

In this condition, as tributaries, first to the emperors of Persia, and afterwards to the Caliphs, the descendants of Shoojaa remained, till the troubles consequent upon the rebellion of the house of Ghizny, tempted Mahomed, the son of Soory to shake off the yoke. He was attacked, defeated, and slain, by the great Mahmood, and his principality annexed to the long list of dependencies upon the crown of Ghizny. A like issue attended the operations of Abool Abass, who raised the standard of revolt against Sultan Ibrahim; he was overthrown, taken prisoner, and his son Mahomed appointed in his room. But though Mahomed appears himself to have worn his chains willingly, it accorded not with the disposition of his race to brook the indignities imposed upon them. His son, Kootb-ood-Deen Hussun no sooner mounted the throne, than he aspired at independence, in attempting to establish which he died, like most of his ancestors, in the field.

On the death of Kootb-ood-Deen Hussun, his son, Sam, fled into India, where he pursued with great success the business of a merchant. With the wealth thus acquired, he was returning to his own country by sea, when a storm arose, the vessel was wrecked, and himself drowned; but his son, Eiz-ood-Deen Hossein, escaping to land upon a plank, underwent many and strange vicissitudes of fortune. After spending some years in slavery, from which he was delivered only that he might fall into the hands of robbers; after being tried, condemned, and brought out for execution,—he received, on his

own solemn protestations of innocence, a free pardon from the Sultan Ibraham, who not only set him at liberty, but bestowed upon him his daughter in marriage, and advanced him to the throne of Goor. It was between his sons, the offspring of this marriage, and Sultan Byram, that the contests alluded to in the last chapter were maintained; and it was by his great-grandson, Shahab-ood-Deen Mahomed Goory, that the house of Ghizny was exterminated.

Having completed the downfal of a family from which his own had suffered severe wrong, Mahomed, after appointing a deputy to govern in Lahore, withdrew to Ghizny. For five years he dwelt there in peace, devoting his time to the consolidation of his conquests, and the restoration of the ancient capital to its former splendour; but at the end of that period, he was again called into India, where a formidable combination of native princes threatened the empire with dissolution. Hoping to defeat their design by an appearance of extreme promptitude, Mahomed pushed rapidly towards Ajmere, and though ill-prepared for a siege, took the town of Betuhnda, into which he threw a garrison; but either because his means were inadequate, or that he believed the danger to have passed away, he attempted nothing further. On the contrary, he began his march to the rear, and had already made some progress, when intelligence reached him that the Rajahs of Ajmere and Delhi, with many others, were advancing at the head of a prodigious force for the relief of Betuhnda. Mahomed instantly retraced his steps, came upon the allies at a place called Terowry, on the Soorsutty, and engaged them with great vigour, but at a disadvantage. The con-

sequence was, that he suffered a disastrous defeat, from which he escaped not without difficulty, and covered with wounds.

Mortified beyond measure at this reverse, which he attributed, with some injustice, to the cowardice of his Omrahs, Mahomed had no sooner placed the frontier provinces in a posture of defence, than he withdrew to Goor, where he inflicted a summary and disgraceful punishment upon as many of them as survived: "He compelled them to walk round the city, with their horses' mouth-bags, filled with barley, hung about their necks, at the same time forcing them to eat the grain like brutes." But Mahomed was not less anxious to redeem his own honour, than he was eager to chastise those through whose negligence he believed it to have suffered an eclipse. Within twelve months from the date of his defeat, he was again at the head of a numerous and well appointed army, consisting of Turks, Tajüks, and Afgauns, with which he hastened to meet the confederates, still occupied in the siege of Betuhnda. It is not necessary to give a minute account of this campaign. Let it suffice to state, that though the army of the Rajahs amounted to 300,000 horse, 3000 elephants, and a large assemblage of infantry, whilst that of Mahomed numbered in all 120,000 men—the latter were completely victorious, slaying, among others, Chawund Ray, King of Delhi, and making prisoner of Pethow Ray, king of Ajmere. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the latter was put to death by his captor; though his natural son, Gola, after agreeing to pay tribute for his dominions, was permitted to ascend the throne in his room.

Mahomed next turned his arms against Delhi, the subjugation of which was, however, reserved for a meaner hand. The new sovereign having by large presents prevailed upon him to suspend his operations, Mahomed returned by way of Sewalik to Ghizny; and after laying waste every region that intervened between the one point and the other, finally reached his capital. But the sovereign of Delhi was no gainer in the end by this retrogression. Kootb-ood-Deen Eibuck, better known by the appellation of Cuttub, a native of Turkistan, and originally a slave, having been left by his master in command of the newly acquired provinces, soon violated the truce which the Rajah had so dearly purchased; and marching against Delhi, drove from it for ever the family of Chawund Ray. Cuttub immediately established the seat of his vice-royalty in Delhi itself; "and it is owing to this circumstance," says the Persian, "that foreign nations say the empire of Delhi was founded by a slave."

It does not exactly appear why Mahomed should have chosen at this particular juncture to visit Ghizny; but of whatever nature the business might be which took him there, he very soon accomplished it. The year was yet young, when he marched into Allahabad, overthrew the Rajah of Kuowj in a general action, and stormed and took by assault the fortress of Asny; after which he pushed upon Benares, which he likewise carried and gave up to plunder. Like other zealots, he committed dreadful havoc among the temples in that sacred city, which had never, till this fatal season, been visited by others besides the wor-

shippers of Brahma; after which, says Ferishta, "the king's army, laden with treasure, took the route of Ghizny."

In this manner affairs were conducted during several years, both Mahomed and his lieutenants extending their conquests in all directions, till the whole of the provinces stretching from the Indus to the confines of Bahar, in one direction, and from Cape Diu to the borders of Gurwal and Nepaul in the other, were in some degree rendered obedient to the Mahommedan rule. It is true, that in numerous instances the native rajahs still exercised the functions of royalty, though they did so subject to the payment of tribute, and liable to feudal service; but in others, Mussulman deputies sat at the helm of state, with powers scarcely less extensive than those of the sultan himself. Even the latter class, however, were not so firmly attached to their master's interests as to stand by him or his family in a reverse of fortune; and hence, Mahomed himself, after rising to the pinnacle of greatness, had well nigh fallen again into obscurity. In an evil hour, he was tempted to carry his army into the heart of the Suljook empire, which though in a state of anarchy, because divided against itself, was by no means disposed to receive the yoke of a stranger. He was totally defeated; and a rumour of his death, extending over his own dominions, a general insurrection was the consequence. Nevertheless, such was the energy of Mahomed's character, that in the end he restored order throughout the wide compass of the empire, which in all probability he would have rendered still more wide had his life been prolonged. But just as he was pre-

paring to lead an expedition into Toorkistan, he was assassinated by a band of Gukkurs, in revenge for numerous depredations committed in their country; and as he left no children behind him, the Omrahs began immediately to contend among themselves about the succession.

In the struggle which followed India fell, as might be expected, to Cuttub, who likewise made himself master for a short time of Ghizny, though, through his own negligence, he afterwards lost it. During his reign, which measured no more than four years, the kingdom was governed by the best laws; and Bahar and Bengal being both of them reduced, the Mahomedan dominions may be said to have reached towards the east, their utmost limits. But Cuttub being killed by a fall from his horse, ere the recent conquests had become consolidated, and his son Aram proving quite incompetent to the cares of government, a variety of insurrections immediately took place. Moultan and Lahor were seized by one chief, Bengal by another, and in every province the standard would have been raised, had not the Omras interfered to prevent it. Deposing Aram, they called to the throne Shums-ood-Deen Altmish,* the adopted son as well as the son-in-law of Cuttub, who, after defeating the rebellious chief, and carrying his arms successfully into Malwa, reigned over the entire track of country between the mouths of the Indus and the Ganges. He died at Delhi, of a fever,

* Like his father-in-law, Altmish was originally a slave, and though he owed his first rise to the beauty of his person, his after-career gave proof, that his mind was not less accurately arranged, than the proportions of his limbs or features.

in the year 1236; and was succeeded by his son Feroze.

The slave of sensual pleasure, and effeminate in all his habits, this prince was ill calculated to keep in subjection a race of turbulent chieftains, who valued no qualities except hardihood, and daring in war. His mother, too, who appears to have possessed extraordinary influence over him, instead of discouraging his vicious propensities, promoted their indulgence in order to serve her own bad ends, till the governors of provinces, disgusted with the mode in which affairs were transacted, entered into a conspiracy to dethrone him. They chose as their leader on this occasion the eldest daughter of the late Sultan, Ruzeea Begum, a woman of singular talent and enterprize; and having overcome all the opposition which one so unpopular was able to offer, they raised her to the Musnud in the year 1236. The reign of this princess, like that of females in general, was marked by a strange commingling of public energy, and private weakness. Though more than once threatened by combinations among her nobles, she on each occasion saved herself by sowing dissension among them, nor was it till she so forgot herself as to form an improper connection with Yakoot, an Abyssinian mercenary, that her authority ceased to be respected. Then, however, acts were perpetrated in her name which gave so much offence even to the most trusty of her officers, that they rose tumultuously in rebellion, and after putting the favorite to death, seized the person of the Queen, and sent her a prisoner to Betuhnda. But though her brother was imme-

diately proclaimed Emperor, such was the address of the Sultana, that she prevailed upon her jailor Mullik Altoonia to espouse her cause, and having given her hand to him in marriage, they advanced with their united powers to dispute the sovereignty. The result, however, was unfavourable to the Begum. Her troops were defeated in two battles, fought, the first near Delhi, the last at Keituhl: and she and her husband being overtaken in the pursuit, they were both put to death on the same day.

Bieram the Second, to whom the reins of government were now committed, appears to have possessed none of the qualifications requisite in the monarch of a wide and semibarbarous empire. Suspicious because timid, nursed in pleasure and a stranger to controul, he exhibited from the first so much weakness and imprudence, that his court became the theatre of endless intrigues and cabals. To counteract these again, the Sultan employed an instrument perfectly congenial to a mind constituted like his. As often as any of his nobles began to exercise influence in the state, he caused them one after another to be assassinated; till in the end no man felt himself secure even in the royal presence. The result was, that a principle of self-defence induced them to combine against him; and his Vizier, after miraculously escaping the daggers of two of his agents, placed himself at the head of the malcontents. These marched to Delhi, took it, after a siege of three months, and cast Bieram into prison, where in a few days he was put to death.

It was during the reign of this prince that the

Moguls, destined to erect in India the greatest empire which it had ever seen, first penetrated into that country. Gingis or Zingis, originally a private individual in a tribe of Tartars, distinguished by the name of Moguls, having by talents and good fortune risen to be its chief, gradually extended his influence over other tribes, till about the year 1210, he was acknowledged as Khan by all the shepherd hordes, from the wall of China to the Volga. Possessed of extraordinary courage and boundless ambition, Gingis now began to aspire at a still more extensive sovereignty; he invaded China with a force which bore down all opposition, took possession of Pekin, and annexed the Northern provinces to his empire. He turned next upon Mahomed, king of Karisme, whose dominions stretched from the borders of Arabia to those of Turkistan. After defeating him in a general action in which 160,000 Karismians fell, Gingis reduced every place of strength on the frontiers; and overrunning the open country with a countless multitude of warriors, compelled Karisme, Transoxiana and Khorassan to submit. Europe then attracted his notice; and his hordes swept across nearly the entire breadth of the known world, till they reached the frontier of Germany. But ere he could push his conquests further, Gingis himself expired. He died on the shores of the Caspian sea, in the year 1227, leaving sons and grandsons behind him to copy the deeds of their progenitor.

Whether the opposition offered by the chivalry of Europe was more serious than they anticipated, or whether the dreary wastes of Russia and Poland

presented few attractions to their cupidity, does not appear; but the successors of Gingis, ceasing to alarm the West, returned soon after his demise to the south. Persia was furiously assailed, and in due time the last remnants of the power of the Caliphs and Suljookians were trampled in the dust. The whole of the provinces moreover, as far as the Indus northward, owned their sway; and even the Indus itself ceased before long to be respected as a barrier. In the year 1242, a band of Moguls passed the river, penetrated into Lahore, and traversed the open country: but receiving intelligence that a numerous army under the command of the Vizier was moving against them, they made no attempt to retain their conquests. On the contrary, they retreated without striking a blow to Ghizny, whither the Vizier, who had a different game to play, deemed it unnecessary to follow.

Such was the condition of the Mogul tribe when the revolution occurred at Delhi, which cost Bieram both his crown and his life. The latter event threatened at first to involve the empire in a civil war, for Mullik Eir-ood-Deen Bulbun, a chief of great influence, made haste to mount the vacant throne; but as there were two sons of the Sultan Feroze still living, though in confinement, the other Omrahs would by no means sanction his usurpation. They accordingly set the princes at liberty, and making choice of the younger, called Alla-ood-Deen Musaood, they proclaimed him Sultan, in opposition to Bulbun. Upon this Bulbun, conceiving that he was not strong enough to dispute the prize, quietly resigned it, and the line of the Goorian dynasty continued to be preserved.

But its honours were feebly sustained by their present possessor. Vicious and weak Musaood gave such offence to the Omrahs, that at the end of four years, they pulled him from his chair, to which his uncle Mahmood, the son of Altmish, a prince of distinguished merit, was, by the unanimous suffrages of all ranks, immediately raised.

The history of Mahmood the Second, like that of many other Eastern monarchs, is a very curious one. On the death of his father he was consigned to prison, where he maintained himself out of the profits of his own industry, transcribing books for such as chose to purchase them, and declining all allowance from the public treasury. One of the few praiseworthy acts which are recorded of Sultan Musaood, was the restoration of Mahmood to freedom, and the conferring upon him the government of Byrach, which he exercised with honour to himself and benefit to the state. He was thus situated when the general voice of the empire, called him to the throne. Though a philosopher in other respects, Mahmood seems not to have been deaf to the whispers of ambition, at least he showed no reluctance to comply with the wishes of the Omrahs. He accepted the proffered sceptre, and swayed it for upwards of twenty years, with a degree of firmness and equity to which India had of late been unaccustomed.

During the reign of his predecessor, the Moguls had twice repeated their inroads into the frontier provinces of Hindostan. On the first occasion, an army, penetrating "by the way of Khulta and Thibet," broke down upon Bengal, where, according to Ferishta, it sustained a signal defeat; on

the second, the invaders followed their original route, by passing the Indus, and advancing as far as Oocha. They were joined in this latter foray by bands of Gukkurs,* who seem to have been ever ready to take up arms against their Mahomedan masters; and as the freebooters were guilty of numerous excesses, Mahmood determined to inflict upon them a signal chastisement. With this view he marched into Mooltan, where upon the banks of the Sodra he established a sort of standing camp; from which detachments were sent out under different leaders, to invade the Gukkur country at several points. These movements, being well combined, produced the results expected from them. The Gukkurs were everywhere defeated, their country overrun, and many thousands of themselves taken prisoners, and sold into slavery.

Having happily finished this series of operations, Mahmood proceeded to enforce obedience among certain of his own Jagheerdars† who had refused to furnish the quota of troops required from them. The method which he adopted to effect this end, conveys no mean idea of his sagacity and moderation; he summoned them all to court, formally deposed them, and bestowed their Jageers upon their sons. This done, he carried arms against various governors and Rajahs, whom the unsettled state of affairs under his predecessors had induced to aim at independence. He proceeded with his

* These people once possessed the whole of the country, between the Indus and the Shylum. They were, and continue to be very warlike, and very lawless.

† The nature of the tenure by which Jageers were held, will be explained by and by.

troops through the country which lies between the Ganges and the Jumna, and after an obstinate siege the fort of Betuhnda* yielded to his arms. He then continued his progress towards Kurra, Gheeas-ood-Deen Bulbun commanding the vanguard. He was met at Kurra by the Rajahs Dulky and Mulky, whom he defeated and plundered, taking many of their families prisoners. These two Rajahs had seized all the country to the south of the Jumna, and had destroyed the king's garrisons in Malwa and Kurra. Equal success attended the arms of the Vizier in a campaign against the mountaineers of Mewat; but perhaps the achievement of Sheer Khan, Viceroy of Lahore and Mooltan, was of all the events which befell in this reign the most gratifying. That officer, who was nephew to the Sultan, and a man "the most celebrated of his age for wisdom, valour, and every princely accomplishment," attacked the Moguls within their own territories, gained several victories, and even secured, for a short time, its ancient capital Ghizny to the empire. If we except, indeed, a conspiracy, in which Mahmood's favorite Gheeas-ood-Deen Bulbun was involved, and which had well nigh proved fatal to the stability of his government, nothing occurred throughout the whole of Mahmood's reign seriously to affect him; and even this, which was occasioned by an imprudent display of partiality towards an individual unworthy of it, led to no mischievous results. The favourite being dismissed, the nobles returned to their duty, and served him ever after with the utmost alacrity.

* Now called Bulundshehr.

† Col. Briggs's History of the Mahomedan Power in India.

It does not appear that the conquests of Sheer Khan in Afgaunistan were long preserved; for we find a fresh army of Moguls crossing the Indus in 1257. They retired, however, without risking a battle, as soon as Mahmood took the field against them; and they returned no more in a hostile form during the remainder of his administration. But in the year following, an ambassador arrived at Delhi, on the part of Hoolakoo, the grandson of Gingis, king of Persia, for the purpose of contracting between the two great powers a league of amity. He was magnificently received; the vizier going out to meet him with a train of 50,000 foreign horse, 2,000 elephants, and 3,000 carriages of fireworks. "Having exhibited some feats of horsemanship in sham fights, and having made a very splendid display before the ambassador, the latter was conducted in state through the city direct to the palace. There the court was arranged in the most gorgeous and magnificent style. All the nobles and public officers of state, the judges, the Moollas, and the great men of the city were present, besides twenty-five princes of Irak-Azum, Khorassan, and Mawur-ool-Nehr, with their retinues, who had sought protection at Delhi from the armies of Gingis Khan, which some time before had overrun most part of Asia. Many tributary Indian princes also were there, and stood next to the throne."

Such a description as this is well calculated to excite ideas of the splendour of Mahmood's court. It may be worth while to contrast with it the order of his private life. "Contrary to the custom of other princes," says the same authority from

which we have just quoted, "Mahmood kept no concubines. He had but one wife, whom he obliged to do every homely part of housewifery. When she complained one day that she had burned her fingers in baking his bread, and desired he would allow her a maid to assist her—he rejected her request, saying, that he was only a trustee for the state, and was determined not to burthen it with needless expenses. He, therefore, exhorted her to persevere in her duty with patience, and God would reward her in the day of judgment."

"As the emperor of India never eats in public, the table of Nasir-ood-Deen (Mahmood) was rather that of a hermit than suitable to a great king; and after his accession to the throne he continued the whimsical habit of purchasing his food from the efforts of his penmanship. One day, as a nobleman was inspecting a Koran of the king's writing before him, he pointed out the word *fee*, which was written twice over; the king, looking at it, smiled, and drew a circle round it. But when the critic was gone he began to erase the circle, and restore the word. This being observed by one of his old attendants, he begged to know his majesty's reason for so doing; to which he replied, that he knew the word was originally right, but he thought it better to erase it from a paper than touch the heart of a poor man by bringing him to shame."*

After a long and prosperous reign of upwards of twenty years, this singular man sickened and died, amid the general lamentation of his subjects, to whom his integrity and other virtues not less than his valour had justly endeared him.

* Col. Briggs, *ut supra.*

Mahmood left no son, nor, indeed, any child behind him; and was succeeded by his late vizier and favourite Gheeas-ood-Deen Bulbun. This arrangement was the more popular, that, independently of his own acknowledged merits, Bulbun possessed claims upon the imperial crown, as well by consanguinity as by alliance; for, besides being married to Mahmood's sister, he was a member of the same tribe, and, according to general belief at least, a kinsman of Mahmood himself. His early history is given by Ferishta, in the following terms:—

"He was a Toork of Kurra Khutta, and of the tribe of Abery. In his youth he was taken by the Moguls that conquered his country, and sold to a merchant, who conveyed him to Bagdad. His father was a chief of great power, and commanded 10,000 horse in the war in which our young hero was carried off. He was brought to Bagdad in the year 630, (1221,) by Kwaja Jumal-ood-Deen, of Bussora, a person famed for his piety and learning. His patron having ascertained that he was of the same tribe with Shooms-ood-Deen Altmish, conveyed him to Delhi, and presenting him to that monarch, was rewarded so handsomely, that he returned with an independent fortune to Bagdad."

Bulbun's rise in the service of the Indian emperor though gradual was rapid. His first employment was as superintendent of the Sultan's falconry, a situation in which he displayed much skill; and he was afterwards advanced from one dignity to another, till, in the reign of Feroze, he was put in command of Punjaub. As usually oc-

curs in such cases, Bulbun made for himself many enemies, whose influence at court caused an order to be issued for his recall; but, aware of the consequences which would have followed obedience, he paid to it no heed. By this means he was, in some degree, driven into rebellion, for he maintained independent possession of his province during the remainder of Feroze's reign; and even when the Begum Ruzeea was advanced to the musnud, he still governed Punjaub in his own name. Nevertheless, he readily joined the confederacy, which had for its object the deposition of that princess; and amid the confusion attendant upon two revolutions, he secured large additions to his dignities and influence.

One of his first measures after ascending the throne was to cause the clandestine removal of a number of Toorky officers, with whom, during Altmish's reign, he had himself been connected in a conspiracy. There was more of prudence than of magnanimity or justice in this; and it was the subject of greater reprobation, that the celebrated Sheer Khan chanced to be of the number slain; yet it was the only act of palpable wrong which, during a reign of twenty-one years, his memorialist lays to his charge. "The death of these chiefs removed all apprehension from his mind, and he afterwards became so renowned for his justice and the wisdom of his administration, that his alliance was courted by the kings of Persia and Tartary. He took particular care that none but men of merit and family should be admitted to any public office,—and for this purpose he endeavoured to make himself acquainted with the talents and con-

nections of every person about his court. While on the one hand he was liberal in rewarding merit, on the other he was no less rigid in punishing vice; for whoever misbehaved in his station was certain of being immediately disgraced."

Ferishta dwells with particular complacency on the generosity of this prince, as well towards sovereigns exiled from their own dominions, as to men of letters and science. He describes, likewise, at great length, the ceremonies used at Court in Bulbun's times, which were to use his own expression, "so imposing, that none could approach the throne without a mixture of awe and admiration." The retinue of the Sultan, moreover, appears to have been of the most dazzling description, including numbers of elephants covered with purple and gold trappings, besides a thousand Tatar knights, clothed in glittering armour, the bits of whose Arab steeds were of silver, and their housings of rich embroidery. These constantly surrounded him on state occasions, whereas, in ordinary cases, "five hundred chosen foot, in rich liveries, with drawn swords, preceded him, proclaiming his approach, and clearing the way." Nor were the fashions and manners of royalty slow in obtaining imitators among the Omrahs and other nobles of the empire. All of these hastened to distinguish themselves by the variety and costliness of their equipages, "till Delhi became a blaze of gold, and jewels were as common as pebbles on the sea shore."

Bulbun deserved the character which was bestowed upon him, of administering justice with strict impartiality; but it is certain that in no in-

stance was it tempered by mercy. If an insurrection or rebellion occurred, he was not satisfied to chastise the leaders, but extended the punishment of high treason to the meanest of their vassals; and so rigid was he in enforcing his authority, that to arrest a single malcontent he would march an army to the remotest corner of the empire. But Bulbun was prudent as well as inflexible. Whilst he formed an expedition against a banditti who inhabited the hills south-east of Delhi, and were in the habit of committing depredations up to the very gates of the capital; and whilst he gave considerable employment to his troops in bridling the wild mountaineers dwelling in the centre of his dominions that refused to acknowledge his sway, he steadily rejected the advice of his counsellors to subdue the distant provinces of Malwa and Guzerat, both of which, though formerly annexed to the empire, had, during the administration of Cuttub, regained their independence. The truth was, that Bulbun saw, with greater perspicacity than they, the real quarter from which dangers threatened. The Moguls, though they affected to court his alliance, had lost nothing of their enterprise or restlessness, and he wisely calculated that it were folly to provoke an enemy, even though he might be feeble in the south, whilst one truly formidable lay like a thunder-cloud in the north. Nor did any great while elapse ere the justice of his conclusions was distinctly shown.

It has been stated, that among the victims of Bulbun's prudential policy, was the illustrious Sheer Khan, who had so often defended the western provinces against the incursions of the Moguls.

The circumstance no sooner became known to the chiefs of that aspiring race, than they hastened to take advantage of it. Timour, the fourth in descent from Gingis, and brother of Argaun King of Persia, who ruled over the provinces from Khorassan to the Indus, burst at the head of a numerous army into Lahore, and finding it in a state of anarchy, owing to the dissensions which raged among its temporary governors, committed great havoc in all directions. But the invader, bold and skilful as he was, did not succeed in penetrating beyond the frontiers of Mooltan, though the sacrifice, at the cost of which his conquests were arrested, was more severely felt than would have been the loss of Mooltan itself.

Bulbun had two sons, Mahomed and Kurra Khan Bajira; the former, a youth of high talent and great promise, the latter, a favourer of musicians, actors, dancers, and story tellers. As soon as intelligence of the Mogul invasion came in, Mahmood requested and obtained permission to oppose them, and being invested with plenary powers, as Soubahdar in the west, he hastened, at the head of a fine army to Lahore. At the same time Kurra Khan was likewise sent to raise troops at Samana, the Sultan warning him, "that if ever he heard of his giving way to wine and his former debaucheries, he would certainly take away his estates, and never put confidence in him again." The prince, adopting the advice of his father, entirely reformed his manners, and gave proofs that, though his mind had taken a wrong bias in his youth, he possessed great abilities; and a place of rendezvous on the river Beea, near Lahore, was

in consequence appointed, where, in case of emergency, he might support his brother.

The Moguls, awed by these preparations, seem to have fallen back; at least we hear of no hostile meeting between them and the Prince Mahomed for the space of three years; and probably, if the case was so, fortune acted favourably towards Bulbun in granting him so long a respite. Be this, however, as it may, the King had scarcely dismissed his sons to their respective provinces, when news were brought him that Toghrul Khan, Soubahdar of Bengal, was in rebellion. That chief, who had waged war with singular success against several of the Rajahs round him, became at last so elated, that the idea of owning himself the vassal, even of the Emperor of India, could no longer be endured; and a false rumour of Bulbun's death reaching him, he immediately raised "the scarlet umbrella." Bulbun wrote to demand an explanation of his conduct, and to require some proof of his allegiance; but finding that no attention was paid to the letter, he forthwith instructed one of his Omrahs, by name Aluptugeen, to depose and succeed the usurper. Aluptugeen accordingly marched to Bengal, where Toghrul, being well prepared for the measure, met and totally defeated him. Bulbun, furious with rage, directed the unsuccessful general to be hanged, and another chief to enforce his orders; but this second movement was equally unsatisfactory with the first, for the royal forces were again overthrown.

Bulbun, who laboured at the time under a severe malady, was no sooner made acquainted with this second defeat, than he rose from his sick bed,

and prepared to take the field in person. The better to conceal his real design, he caused a rumour to be circulated, that the state of his health rendered a change of air and scene necessary; and he drew his son Kurrah Khan, with a strong body of troops from Samana, for the ostensible purpose of attending him on a hunting expedition. This done, and a flotilla of boats being collected, the Sultan passed the Ganges with all expedition, and pushed with forced marches, himself travelling in a litter, upon Bengal. But the rivers being everywhere swollen, (for it was the rainy season,) so many checks occurred, that long ere he reached the rebellious province, Toghrul became aware of his approach. He immediately collected a numerous army, and retreated with his elephants, treasure and effects, to Jajnugger, in Orissa.

Bulbun delayed but a few days in Bengal, that he might appoint a new governor; after which he marched into Orissa. He was joined on the banks of the Ucha river by the Zemindar of Soonargam, whom he ordered to guard the fords, in order to prevent Toghrul's escape; but though he himself used the utmost diligence, all his endeavours to overtake the rebel proved abortive. Under these circumstances, he directed Mullik Yar Beg Birloss, an officer of great courage and enterprise, to push forward at the head of 1000 chosen cavalry, for the purpose of collecting intelligence. Mullik advanced full twenty miles in front of the main column, yet even he, with all his activity and address, failed for a time in obtaining satisfactory information. One day, however, the brother of Mullik Yar Beg, Mullik Mookuden, afterwards known

by the name of Toghrul Koosh, (the slayer of Toghrul,) being out with forty horse on a reconnoitring party, observed some bullocks with packsaddles in a valley. He rushed forward, seized the drivers, and began immediately to question them as to the situation of the rebel army. For a while they obstinately pretended ignorance; but the head of one of them being struck off, they rest fell on their faces, and confessed that they had just quitted Toghrul's camp, which was about four miles in advance. Mullik Mookuden sent back the drivers to Mullik Yar Beg, that he might examine them in person, and proceeded himself to reconnoitre the enemy. He saw from a rising ground the whole encampment stretching to a prodigious extent over the plain, with the elephants and horses picketed, and every thing in apparent security; and he instantly devised and carried into execution one of the most daring exploits on record. Having noted the position of Toghrul's tent, which stood in the centre of the bivouac, he put himself at the head of his gallant band, and advanced at full speed towards the camp. No efforts being made to arrest his progress, because his party were naturally looked upon as friends by the troops which held the outposts, he gained the head-quarters without having been compelled to draw a sword. But a different scene occurred here. The forty cavaliers with loud shouts of "victory to Sooltan Bulbun," charged furiously into the audience tent, cut down such of the nobles as chanced to be in attendance, and forced their way to the throne; whilst Toghrul, imagining that he was surprised by the whole of the royal army, endeavoured to

save himself by flight. He rushed from the tent, sprang upon a bare-backed horse, and galloped towards the river, but was shot dead by an arrow from Mullik's bow, when in the act of swimming the stream.

Not satisfied with witnessing the fall of Toghrul, Mullik darted into the water, dragged his body to the shore, and cut off his head. He had barely time, however, to hide it in the sand, casting the trunk into the stream, down which it floated, ere a band of the enemy, flying they knew not from what danger, came upon him. Ignorant of his person, they eagerly demanded whether he had seen their chief; Mullik of course denied that he had, and they swept on, carrying tumult and dismay wheresoever they went. In a word, the whole encampment was in confusion; the troops, destitute of leaders, and overcome with panic, fled; and Mullik, with his brave followers, remained masters of the field. They sent the head of the rebellious Soubahdar to Bulbun, whose astonishment exceeded all bounds; and though they were at first reproved for their rashness, they received in the end many and rich rewards.

Having appointed his son, Kurrah Khan, to the command of the eastern provinces, the Sultan marched back to Delhi, where he proceeded to inflict summary punishment upon all who had held with Toghrul any communication. Multitudes of persons, of both sexes, and all ages, were put to death, some of them with circumstances of extreme atrocity, nor was it till the kazies, the mufties, and the learned men, for which latter class he professed great respect, went in a body to re-

monstrate with him, that he relaxed in the exercise of his cruelties. But though thus fortunate over one formidable enemy, Bulbun, soon found himself exposed to the attacks of another, not less to be dreaded. The Moguls were again in motion; and his amiable and accomplished son, Mahomed, whom he had recalled to Delhi, for the purpose of publicly investing him with the insignia of succession, was sent to repel the invasion.

Mahomed found the Moguls in great force under Timour,* the chief of whom mention has already been made. He engaged them on the left bank of the Lahore River, one of the numerous streams which join the Indus in Mooltan, and after a fierce action, defeated them. But following up his advantage with too much precipitation, he fell, with only five hundred troopers, into an ambuscade, where, after performing prodigies of valour, he was slain. "When the army returned from the pursuit of Timour Khan," says Ferishta, "and beheld their prince weltering in his blood, the shouts of victory were changed to the wailings of woe. Not a dry eye was to be seen, from the meanest soldier to the general." A similar effect was produced in the capital, as soon as the fatal news reached it, and the old king, now in his eightieth year, was so oppressed with grief, that life itself became irksome to him. Nevertheless, he struggled hard to bear up against a misfortune, the consequences of which proved even more fatal to his race, than could have been anticipated; and after taking such measures

* This person was governor of Ghizny, and is not to be confounded with the great Timour or Tamerlane.

as appeared advisable for the security of the frontier, he applied himself to the painful task of altering the succession.

Mahomed left behind him a son named Kie Khoosrow, whom Bulbun, with natural partiality, would have advanced to the dignities of his father; but either because the young prince exhibited few of the talents necessary in a sovereign, or that Kurrah Khan's claims were esteemed stronger, the latter was declared next in succession to the crown. This done, he was recalled from Bengal, that he might attend upon the reigning monarch till his death; but the prince soon grew weary of acting a secondary part, and withdrew, without obtaining the royal sanction, to his province. Bulbun was highly offended at the proceeding. He immediately brought back Kie Khoosrow from Mooltan, assembled a council of Omrahs, and caused them to swear allegiance in his presence, after which he shut himself up in his own apartments, where in a few days he expired. But neither their own oaths, nor the will of their deceased master, were regarded by the chiefs of Delhi any longer than suited their own convenience; and at the suggestion of the Kutwal, or chief magistrate of the city, who had ever been at enmity with Prince Mahomed, Kie Khoosrow's accession was violently opposed. Kurrah Khan was then invited to ascend the throne. He declined to do so, upon which they set up his son Keikobad, whilst Kie Khoosrow, glad to escape with life, returned to his former government of Lahore.

Keikobad was in the eighteenth year of his age when he ascended the throne, and is stated to have

been remarkably handsome, as well as mild and affable; but he was destitute of talent, the slave of pleasure, and as a necessary consequence, the mere tool of his ministers. The first who obtained an ascendency over him, by ministering to the gratification of his passions, was Mullik Nizam-ood Deen, the nephew and son-in-law of that Kutwal, through whose management Bulbun's will was set aside. Like most favourites, this man employed his influence solely to advance his own interests, and having determined to aim at the crown itself, he scrupled not to cut off every individual from whom he apprehended that he was likely to meet with opposition. Kie Koosrow, the young Sultan's cousin, died by the hands of assassins hired for the purpose; the vizier Kwaja Khuttur was disgraced, whilst all the old servants of the late king were one by one removed. The next victims of his ambition were a band of Mogul chiefs, whom Bulbun had engaged in his service, and whom interest, if no loftier principle, attached strongly to the family of their benefactor. These were all cut off by the king's guards, and their private property confiscated. Then followed a variety of imprisonments among the Omrahs who were supposed to be connected with the Mogul party, till the indignation of all classes rose to the highest pitch, and men were everywhere ripe for revolt. It was now that Kurrah Khan, the king's father, apprehensive of greater evils, determined to interfere. Having tried in vain the effect of expostulation, and warned his son of the consequences of his folly, he put himself at the head of an army, and marched towards Delhi; not intending the dethronement of his son,

far less to slay him, but resolved at all hazards to deliver him from the influence of his crafty favourite. Keikobad hastened to meet his father with a force greatly superior to that led against him; and the two armies encamped opposite to each other, in daily expectation of a battle.

In the meanwhile, Kurrah Khan, anxious to avoid this extremity, wrote to his son in the most affectionate terms, and entreated an interview. It accorded not with the policy of Nizam-ood-Deen that any such meeting should take place, so he employed every artifice to prevent it; but though he succeeded in checking the first impulse, which would have sent Keikobad at once into his father's presence, he failed in hindering the old man from visiting his son. Kurrah Khan approached the sultan's tent, under all the indignities which a servile court could heap upon him, the master of ceremonies exclaiming, according to custom, "Kurrah Khan comes to humble himself before the King of the Universe;" but he no sooner entered the presence than nature asserted her supremacy. Keikobad, beholding his father in tears, sprang from the throne, threw himself at his feet, and implored his pardon; and when the latter raised him up, he fell upon his neck, weeping bitterly. In a word, Kurrah Khan so far gained his end, that the Sultan promised to dismiss his ambitious minister, and to take the administration of public affairs into his own hands.

For a few days after his return to Delhi, Keikobad devoted his whole energies to business, and he so far kept his word with Kurrah Khan, that finding Nizam-ood-Deen too powerful for any open

attack, he caused him to be secretly poisoned. But the Sultan was too weak and too giddy to persevere long in the paths of honour. He soon returned to his old pernicious habits, and other favourites, equally aspiring, and more crafty than Nizam-ood-Deen, gained the ascendancy over him. The consequence was, that every noble about the court began to intrigue for power; and the king, smitten with paralysis, sank into insignificance. A sort of civil war ensued between the Khiljies, headed by Jual-ood-deen Feroze, on the one hand, and the Mogul party, marshalled by Mulik Atmeer Kuchen, on the other, which, after a brief struggle, ended in the downfal of the Royal House of Goor. It is not necessary to describe in detail the progress of that sedition. Let it suffice to state, that whilst the Moguls would have supported Keikobad, or to speak more correctly, desired to set up his infant son in his room, the Khiljies aimed at nothing less than a change of dynasty, and fortune declaring in their favour, a change of dynasty was effected. Keikobad and his son were both murdered; and Feroze, the leader of the rebellion, seized the crown.

CHAPTER IV.

Origin of the Khilji tribe—Accession of Feroze—His extreme moderation—The Deccan first invaded—The execution of Dervish Siddy Mowla—Feroze murdered—Is succeeded by Alla—His cruelties and severe Government—Murdered by Mubarick, a Slave—He is assassinated—The Murderer deposed and executed—Accession of Ghozy Beg Toghluck.

JOOEAL-OOD Deen Feroze, the new Emperor of Delhi, was a member of the Khilji tribe, one of the branches of the great Afgaun family, which long maintained its independence among the rugged districts situated on the southern and western sides of Lahore. Of the origin of that tribe more than one account is given by the marvel-loving historians of the East; but as there is little in such details calculated to interest the English reader, it were a grievous waste of time to transcribe them here. Let it suffice to state, that while their local situation afforded to the Khiljies ample security against invasion, their warlike disposition led them to take service in the armies of their more wealthy neighbours, and that from the period of the accession of the Goor dynasty, large numbers of them were always to be found in the ranks, and about the person of the Indian Emperor. Like mercenaries

in general, the Khiljies were not backward in possessing themselves of as many offices of trust as their own daring and the weakness of their masters placed within their reach. It is true, that they were not unopposed here, for the recruits gathered from the Moguls were at least as aspiring as themselves; but they went on from step to step, till, in the end, they succeeded in giving, as has been narrated, a new race of occupants to the Delhian throne.

The Emperor Feroze had attained to his seventieth year, when the events recorded in the last chapter occurred. With unaccountable inconsistency, he no sooner found himself in possession of the musnud, to which he had waded through a sea of blood, than he assumed all at once a character of extraordinary moderation, changing the colour of the royal umbrella from red to white, and seeking celebrity by a boundless display of mercy and benevolence. It is reported of him, that "he hardly ever punished a fault among his domestics," that he was never known to lay violent hands on the property of his wealthy subjects, that he associated familiarly with his former acquaintance, joined their parties, "and drank wine in moderation with them as before." His chief favourites, however, were selected from among the men most distinguished about his court for their courage, wit, and intelligence; and the learned of all classes, as well as musicians, both vocal and instrumental, found in him a liberal patron. But it was not towards his own immediate dependents alone that Feroze exhibited himself in the light of an indulgent master. On more than

one occasion he overlooked offences which sovereigns, more particularly in the East, are accustomed to visit with the severest punishments, till his clemency led, before long, to almost as many evils as could have resulted from a line of conduct diametrically the reverse. It may not be amiss to subjoin one or two instances of this singular man's mode of acting towards his enemies.

"In the second year of his reign," says Ferishta, "Mullik Jujhoo, the nephew of Gheias-ood-Deen Bulbun, at the instigation of Ameer Ally, the Master of the Robes, who held the government of Oude, under the new title of Hatim Khan, assumed royal privileges in his government of Kurra, caused new coin to be struck, and a white canopy to be placed over his head, and proclaimed himself King, under the title of Sultan Mooghies-ood-Deen. He was joined by most of the nobles of the house of Bulbun, as well as by several Rajahs of consequence in that quarter. With these reinforcements he had the boldness to march towards Delhi.

"Julal-ood-Deen Feroze, hearing of these events, appointed his son, the Prince Arkully Khan, with a select body of Khiljian cavalry, to proceed in advance, himself following with the main army, against the rebels. Arkully Khan encountered the enemy about twenty-five miles from the city, and repulsed them after an obstinate engagement. Several Omrahs were made prisoners during the pursuit, among whom was Ameer Ally, the governor of Oude. These were placed on camels with boughs of trees hung round their necks, and in that condition sent to his father.

When Julal-ood-Deen Feroze saw them, he instantly ordered them to be unbound, to have a change of linen given to them, and an entertainment to be provided; and having called them before him, he repeated a verse to this purpose; "Evil for evil is easily returned, but he only is great who returns good for evil." They were then commanded to retire, in full assurance of his forgiveness. Jujhoo some days after, being taken by the Zemindars, was sent prisoner to the King, who, instead of condemning him to death, as was expected, gave him a free pardon, and sent him to Mooltan, where he had a handsome establishment for life.

"The King's lenity was universally condemned by the Khiljy chiefs, who strongly recommended him to adopt the policy of Gheias-ood-Deen Bulbun, never to pardon a traitor. They said that at all events the rebels should be deprived of sight, to deter them from further mischief, and as an example to others. If this were not done, they asserted, that treason would soon raise its head in every quarter of the empire, and should the Moguls once gain the superiority, they would erase the very name of Khiljy out of Hindostan. The King answered, that what they said was certainly according to the ordinary rules of policy, 'but, my friends,' said he, 'I am now old, and I wish to go down to the grave without shedding more blood.'"

The prognostications of the Khiljy chiefs were not slow in receiving, to a certain extent, their fulfilment. The people, aware of the disinclination of the sovereign to take away life on any ac-

count whatever, soon ceased to hold either the laws or their administrators in respect; and house-breaking, robbery, murder, and every other species of crime, were systematically and undisguisedly committed. Nor did the mischief end here. His own counsellors and intimate personal friends soon began to devise plots for his overthrow, with the view of raising to the throne one of the most able and resolute of their own number, by name Mullik Taj-ood Deen Koorchy. "For this purpose," says the historian, "they met one day at his house, and in their cups began to talk openly of assassinating the King, and even went so far as to dispute which of them should have the glory of striking the blow. While in this situation one of the company privately withdrew, and, running to Julal-ood-Deen Feroze, repeated circumstantially every particular of what had passed. The King immediately sent a guard to surround the house, which seized the conspirators and brought them before the King. He upbraided them with their treason, and having drawn his sword, threw it on the ground, and challenged the boldest of them to wield it against him; but they fell on their faces and remained silent and confounded. One of them, however, Mullik Noosrut, who had more assurance and presence of mind than the rest, told the King, that words uttered by men in a state of intoxication were but as the empty air. "Where shall we ever find," said he, "so good and gracious a sovereign? or where can the King hope to obtain such faithful servants, should he condemn us for a little unguarded sally?" It is not very easy for persons accustomed only to

the ceremony which prevails at European courts to perceive the full force of this scene; but such as have had an opportunity of witnessing the familiarity which still prevails in India among Mahommedans of all ranks, will be at no loss in discovering it. It was precisely such a proceeding as might be expected among men, who beheld in their sovereign the first noble in the land; and it led to a result altogether in accordance with the placable temper of Feroze. "The King," continues Ferishta, "pleased with this mode of treating the affair, smiling, called for wine, and after giving the speaker a cup with his own hand, dismissed the whole, though not without severely reproaching them for their conduct."

One remarkable contradiction to the general leniency of Feroze's proceedings is dwelt upon at great length by the Oriental writers. There flourished in his reign a Dervish named Siddy Mowla, a man of prodigious wealth, of boundless liberality, and of singular abstinence in his own system of living. After spending many years in foreign travel, Siddy Mowla settled permanently in Delhi, where he instituted an academy, and kept open house for the entertainment of travellers, fakeers, and the poor of all denominations. He kept no women nor slaves, and lived entirely upon rice; yet his expenses in charity were so great, that as he accepted of no presents, "men were at a loss to conceive whence his finances were supplied, and concluded that he understood the science of Alchemy." So long as these acts of liberality were performed without any professed view to the accomplishment of political purposes, Siddy

Mowla met with no interruption on the part of the King; but even the virtue of the Dervish was not, it would appear, proof against the whispers of ambition, which incited him to aspire to the crown. His design was communicated to Feroze, who caused him to be instantly arrested, and in spite of his sacred character put him to death, with circumstance of peculiar harshness. But the execution of a Dervish, however justly merited, was not permitted to pass unpunished. The holy man cursed both Feroze and his family with his dying breath, and from that hour " the prosperity of the King began visibly to decline." Every day new factions and disputes arose, which greatly disturbed his administration. Domestic calamities also pressed hard upon him, among which was the illness of his eldest son, Khan Khanan, who was attacked by a malady which set all the powers of medicine at defiance, and brought him, within a few days, to the grave. But this was one of the least of the evils that befel the Sultan.

Immediately on his accession to the throne, Feroze had taken under his especial protection his two nephews, Alla-ood-Deen, and Almas Beg, the sons of his brother Shahab-ood-Deen Musaood. The former of these princes, having highly distinguished himself in repelling an invasion of the Moguls, was promoted to the government of Kurra, one of the districts of the Doab, or country lying between the rivers Ganges and Jumna. He was scarcely established here, when he solicited and obtained permission, to attack the Hindoo Rajahs bordering upon his province, in revenge for certain real or pretended ravages committed by their

adherents within its territories. He was eminently successful in this expedition, the first which had as yet been made by a Mahomedan general into the Deccan, and he was rewarded by having the province of Oude attached to his already extensive command. He was not slow in turning his increased revenues to account. He renewed his inroads into the Deccan, penetrated as far as Doulatabad, overthrew the armies which opposed him, and returned loaded with plunder; after which he entered into a conspiracy against the life of his uncle and benefactor. He was but too successful in the latter enterprize. The old man, deaf to the admonitions of his councillors, would not believe that "one whom he had brought up from childhood, and cherished with a fatherly affection, could entertain any designs unfriendly to him;" and hence in an evil hour committed himself unguarded and unarmed to the protection of his ambitious nephew. The consequences were exactly such as had been foretold. At a given signal, Alla's attendants rushed upon the Sultan, whom they cruelly put to death, and Alla himself hastened to carry his ambitious designs into execution.

It does not appear that Alla-ood-Deen, when he first began to act with hostility towards his uncle, entertained any idea of supplanting him upon the throne of Delhi. A less gigantic scheme gave, for a time, occupation to his thoughts, which were wholly bent on the dismemberment of the empire, and the establishment of an independent sovereignty, at Lucknow. But the imprudence of Feroze's widow, who without waiting for the return of her elder son, from Mooltan, set up the

prince Khuddur Khan, a mere child, upon the throne, presented a temptation to the cupidity of Alla, which he found it impossible to withstand. He marched with his followers upon Delhi, defeated the Queen's army outside the walls, and, gaining over the giddy populace by a display of profuse liberality, soon made himself master of the place. The Queen with her son escaped to Mooltan, where for a brief space they maintained themselves; but they were eventually betrayed, together with the other members of the family, into Alla's hands, and suffered the fate which usually attends persons in their circumstances.

Every impediment being now removed, Alla seized the Imperial crown, which he wore, with great vigor and extraordinary good fortune, for upwards of twenty years. Cruel in his temper, and vindictive in his system of government, he drove many of his nobles into rebellion; but as his talents and courage were commensurate with his cruelty, he permitted no seditious movements to interrupt his repose. The rebels were one after another overthrown, their titles escheated and their estates transferred to others. Against foreign enemies likewise he was eminently successful. He repelled three invasions of the Moguls; though undertaken by a force of not less than 200,000 men, and defeated them in several pitched battles, of which one was fought in the immediate vicinity of the capital. He was equally fortunate in all the numerous expeditions, which either in his own person, or by his generals, he made against the Hindoos. Guzerat was subdued, and permanently annexed to the empire; the Deccan was overrun,

great numbers of the Rajpoot princes were reduced to the condition of tributaries, and even the Carnatic escaped not a hostile visitation. It is not worth while to describe in detail the order of these several operations, which present few features at variance with those attaching to barbarous warfare in general; it will be more to the purpose if we introduce one or two anecdotes, illustrative of the manners of the age and country, not less than of the character of the man himself.

It is asserted of this triumphant usurper, that though possessed of natural talents of the highest order, he was so totally wanting in the first elements of education, as to be equally incapable of reading and writing the language which he spoke. In spite of this defect, however, his mind seems to have been cast in the genuine mould of an oriental hero. Not satisfied with the sovereignty of India, he began, says the historian, in the third year of his reign, when prosperity shone upon his arms to form some extraordinary projects. One of these was the establishment of a new religion, that, like Mahomet, he might be held in veneration by posterity; another, to leave a viceroy at Delhi, and, like Alexander the Great, to undertake the conquest of the world; and he proceeded so far in the accomplishment of the latter scheme as to assume the title of Alexander the Second. As might be expected, none of the Omras who frequented his court, opposed themselves to either design; but there was a functionary who saw their absurdity, and the mode by which he succeeded in diverting the Sultan, from his purpose, is too characteristic to be omitted.

"Alla-ool-Moolk, the Kutwul of the city, an old man and so fat that he was unable to attend the court oftener than once a month, being one day sent for by the king, to be consulted regarding his religious project, determined (however fatal the consequence,) to reject every measure proposed in opposition to the doctrine of the Mahomedan faith, and to make a sacrifice of his few remaining years rather than encourage the king's design. With this firm resolve, he attended at court, and found the king drinking with a number of his principal chiefs. Alla-ood-Deen began to converse with Mullik Alla-ool-Moolk on his favorite subject; but the old man told him he had something to say to him in private, and would be glad if he would order the wine and the company away."

"The king smiled, and desired all the company to retire except four. The old magistrate then fell upon his face, and having kissed the ground, rose up and thus spoke: "Oh, King! religion is the law of God, whose spirit inspired his prophets, but it depends not on the opinions of mortals. We are taught by God's holy word to believe that the spirit of prophecy ended with Mahomed, the last and greatest of his messengers. This being acknowledged by great and small, by all nations, and by all degrees of people, should your intentions against the true faith be once known, it is impossible to conceive what hatred you will incur, and what bloodshed and disturbance may ensue. It is therefore advisable that you should set aside these new notions, since the accomplishment of your views exceeds the power of mere mortals. Did not Gingiz Khan, the most powerful of mo-

narchs, and his successors, labour for ages to subvert our faith, that they might establish their own.* What rivers of blood have flowed in the contest, till at length the spirit of truth prevailed, and they became proselytes to that religion, which they had endeavoured to destroy." The king, having listened with attention, replied, "What you have said is just, and founded on friendship and reason. I will for ever lay aside all thoughts of this scheme, which has so long engaged my attention. But what do you think of my project of universal conquest?"

The venerable magistrate replied, "Some kings, in former ages, formed the same great design which your majesty has resolved on at present; and your power, personal bravery, and wealth, give you at least equal hopes of success; but the times are not so favourable, and the government of India seems not to stand upon so firm a basis as to support itself in your absence. Perfidy and ingratitude daily appear. Brothers become traitors to each other, and children conspire against their parents. How much is this degenerate age unlike to the virtuous times of Alexander! Men were then endued with honourable principles, and the cunning and treachery of the present age were held in utter abomination. Your majesty has no counsellors like Aristotle, who, by his wisdom and policy, not only kept his own country in peace and security, but brought other nations, by volun-

* The allusion here is to the differences which existed between the creeds professed by various sects of Mahommedans.

tary consent, to place themselves under his master's protection. If your majesty can put equal confidence in your nobles, and can depend as much upon the love of your people as Alexander was enabled to do, you may then venture to carry your scheme into execution; if not, we cannot well reconcile it to reason." The king, after musing a while, said, "What you have told me bears on it the face of sincerity and truth; but what availeth all this power in armies, in wealth, and in kingdoms, if I content myself with what I already possess, and do not employ it in acquiring fame and glory?" Mullik Alla-ool-Moolk replied, "There are two undertakings in which the king's treasure may be expended to good purpose. The first is the conquest of the southern kingdoms of Hindostan, such as Runtunbhore, Chittoor, Jalwur, and Chundery; and the second the reduction of the south-eastern provinces, as far as Lumghan and Kabul, so as to form a barrier for the protection of India against the invasion of the Moguls. This," said the chief magistrate, "would secure the peace of Hindostan, and procure to the king immortal honour, by bestowing happiness upon his people. But even to succeed in this project, it is requisite that the king should abstain from excess of wine, and from licentiousness."

The historian adds, that "the king, contrary to the old man's expectations, took all this advice in good part; applauding his candour, presented him with a robe of honour, ten thousand rupees, and two horses, richly caparisoned; and granted to him and his posterity two villages in freehold." That he likewise carried the old man's suggestions

into force has already been shown; for it was posterior to the conversation given above, that Alla turned his arms against the Rajas south of the Nerbudda.

While thus busied in the enlargement and consolidation of the empire, Alla narrowly escaped falling a victim to one of the many conspiracies to which eastern princes are at all moments liable. It chanced that being on his march against the Raja of Runtunbhore, he arrived one day at a particular district where game was abundant; and he halted his army, that he might enjoy the pleasures of the chase. A keen sportsman, and a bold rider, he was soon separated from the main body of his guards, and getting benighted in the forest, he slept under a tree, attended by no stronger escort than three or four troopers. When the morning dawned he ascended an eminence, for the purpose of ascertaining where he was. The movement exposed him to the observation of his nephew Sooliman Shah, who instantly conceived the idea of assassinating him, as he had assassinated his predecessor; and the idea was no sooner entertained than it was carried into execution. Gathering round him a band of Mogul mercenaries, who had for some time been in his service, Sooliman rushed upon the Sultan; and discharging a flight of arrows at his person, left him for dead.

To hasten back to the camp, to publish the news of the emperor's death, and to seize the crown, were the work almost of a moment; and so completely were the nobles taken by surprise, that not a voice was raised against the usurpation. But Sooliman had miscalculated the chances.

Alla, though grievously wounded, recovered, and fleeing with about sixty faithful followers, soon gathered round him a troop of 500 horse. With these he marched boldly upon Delhi, before the walls of which he displayed the royal umbrella; and he had the satisfaction immediately to discover that the attempt of Sooliman was not connected with any complicated treason. The soldiers hurried in crowds to his standard, and the usurper was dethroned and put to death, with all his relatives and dependents.

Not long after this the Sultan, either from caprice or a conviction of the impolicy of an opposite line of conduct, began seriously to think of introducing improvements into his system of government. With this view he solicited the advice of the most experienced of his omras; and finding that they united in attributing the many conspiracies to which he was exposed to his own gross inattention to business, he resolved no longer to lay himself open to such a charge. From that hour he abandoned all his former habits, and gave himself up to a strict inquiry into the administration of justice, to redress grievances, and to examine narrowly into the private as well as public conduct of official persons. He set spies in every family of note; he established a mode of communication so sure, yet so secret, that no transaction of moment in any of the provinces was concealed from him; and he punished with such rigour all acts of violence and rapine, that "the traveller slept secure on the highway; and the merchant carried his commodities in safety from the sea of Bengal to the mountains of Kabul, and from

Tulingana to Kashmeir." He published an edict, prohibiting the use of wine and strong liquors on pain of death; and he himself set an example of abstinence, by emptying his cellar into the streets. But, above all, he struck a severe blow at the power of the omras, by prohibiting any farther intermarriages among their families, except by especial license from himself. Nor did the matter end here. Wherever the property either of Mussulman or Hindoo appeared to place him above the reach of the law, the Sultan caused it to be confiscated, till, to use the words of his annalist, "men were almost reduced to a level over all the empire." Lastly, he made a regulation which arbitrarily required that the zemindars* should give a strict account of their collections, and he appointed over them a class of officers, whose especial business it was to see that they did no wrong to the cultivators. All this might be, as far as he was himself concerned, exceedingly politic, yet it cannot be denied that Alla, in his reforms as well as in his abuses, carried matters to an absurd extreme. There was no transaction between man and man which he sought not to regulate by law. To every article of barter a price was affixed by authority, and the value of the precious metals themselves was arbitrarily changed to suit particular purposes. Thus, because it appeared that an army of 500,000 horse could not be maintained on the existing rate of wages, Alla ordered the pay of each soldier to be reduced one half; and,

* The nature of the zemindar's office will be explained in another place.

to prevent any evil consequences from arising out of the measure, he commanded that throughout the compass of the empire the prices of goods should undergo a similar reduction. In like manner, farmers were restricted to the occupation of a certain quantity of land, and to a limited number of servants. Graziers, too, were prohibited from possessing more than an established tale of cows, sheep, and goats; in a word, every act, both of public and private life, furnished matter for legislation.

While he thus sought to extend his influence over the minds as well as the bodies of his subjects, Sultan Alla was not neglectful of his own personal deficiencies. He set himself sedulously to the task of self-education; and so great was his perseverance, that he soon became perfect master of the Persian language. He now studied the best authors,—became the patron of learned men,—and delighted in the conversation of the most eminent among the kazies. The following narrative of his first interview with one of that learned body bears too closely upon the condition of the Hindoos, not only in former times, but at this moment, to be withheld.

"The King one day addressing himself to Kazy Moghees-ood-deen, said, he wished to put a few questions to him on the subject of the law. As the King had not only never consulted the learned men on any former occasions, but had declared them all to be hypocrites and rogues, the Kazy was confounded, and replied, 'I fear by what your majesty proposes my last hour is come; if so, and

it be your majesty's will, I am prepared to die; but it will be only adding unnecessarily to the crime, if I am to be punished for speaking the truth, and according to the word of God.' The King asking why he was afraid, he replied, 'if I speak the truth, and your majesty is offended, it may cost me my life, and if I speak falsely, and your majesty should ascertain the truth, I shall then be deserving of death.' The King told him to allay his apprehensions, and to answer his questions in conformity with the law of the Prophet (on whom be the peace of God).'

"First question,—'From what description of Hindoos is it lawful to exact obedience and tribute?' Answer: 'It is lawful to exact obedience and tribute from all infidels, and they can only be considered as obedient who pay the poll-tax and tribute without demur, even should it be obtained by force; for, according to the law of the Prophet, it is written, regarding infidels, 'tax them to the extent that they can pay, or utterly destroy them.' The learned of the faith have also enjoined the followers of Islam to slay them, or to convert them to the faith, a maxim conveyed in the words of the Prophet himself. The Imam, Huneef, however, subsequently considers, that the poll-tax, or as heavy a tribute imposed upon them as they can bear, may be substituted for death, and he has accordingly forbidden that their blood should be heedlessly spilt. So that it is commanded that the poll-tax and tribute should be exacted to the uttermost farthing from them, in order that the punishment may approximate as nearly as possible to

death.'* The King smiled, and said, 'you may perceive, that without reading learned books, I am in the habit of putting in practice, of my own accord, that which has been enjoined by the Prophet.'

"Second question,—'Is it lawful to punish public servants who may be guilty of taking bribes, or of defrauding the government, in the same manner as if they had committed theft, and were actually thieves?' Answer: 'If a public servant is handsomely paid, according to the responsibility and labour imposed on him, and he is then guilty of receiving bribes, or of extorting money by force from those with whom he has business, it is lawful to recover the same from him by any means which the government may think fit; but it is unlawful to deprive him of life or limb like a common malefactor.'

"The King replied, 'In this particular also I have acted in conformity with the law; for I make a point of exacting, even by rack and the torture, all such sums as are proved to have been fraudulently obtained by the public servants.'

"Third question,—'Am I entitled to retain, as my private property, the wealth I obtained during my campaign against Dewgur, before I ascended the throne, or ought it to be placed in the public treasury? and has the army any right to a portion of that booty?' Answer: 'The portion of the king in that booty is only one share in common with every soldier who accompanied him on that expe-

* Such is the law which we profess still to administer in British India, for no other imaginable reason than because we conquered India from a Mahommedan power.

dition.' The King was displeased at this reply, and said, 'how can that be considered public property, or belonging to the troops, which I obtained during the time I was a general, and which was gained through my own personal exertions?' The kazy replied, 'Whatever the King may have obtained by his individual exertions belongs to him; but whatever is obtained by the exertion of the troops, should be equally shared with them.'

"Fourth question,—'What portion of the above property belongs of right to me individually, and to my children?' The kazy said inwardly, my fate is now certainly determined, for since the King was angry at the former reply, that which I must now give will be still more offensive. The King said, 'speak, I spare your life.' The kazy replied, 'There are three modes in which your majesty may act: 1st. If you mean to act with strict justice, and according to the laws of the caliphs, you will be content to retain for yourself one portion in common with others, who shared in the danger. 2d. If you would take a middle course, you will retain for yourself a share equal to the largest portion of the booty which has fallen to the lot of any single officer in the expedition. 3d. If your majesty, on the other hand, adopts the opinions which will be given probably by learned men, who look out for passages in the holy books as authority, in order to reconcile the minds of kings to despotic acts, you will reserve for yourself out of that booty a portion something greater than any other of the generals, and such as may be suitable to the splendour and dignity of the crown; but I cannot think that the king can found a plea to any thing beyond

this; your royal children may also, on the same grounds, each be allowed a portion, either equal to the share of each common soldier, or to the share of an officer of rank.

"The King became angry and said, 'You mean to assert then, that the private expenses of my household, and the money which is distributed in presents and rewards, are contrary to law.' The kazy replied, 'when the King consults me on points of law, I am compelled to answer according to the written word of the Koran; but if you ask me on the score of policy, I can only say, whatever you do is right, and according to the custom of governments, the more you accumulate and expend, the greater is the splendour which attends your court and reign.' Upon this the King said, 'I am in the habit of stopping one month's pay, for three successive years, from every soldier who neglects to appear at muster; I always make it a rule also to extirpate every living soul of the family of a person going into rebellion, and to confiscate the whole of their property in whatever country it may be. Do you mean to say also that it is unlawful to exact fines from fornicators, thieves, and drunkards?'

"The kazy, overpowered by the language and manner of the King, got up, and went as far as the threshold of the hall, where he prostrated himself, and as he rose, pronounced, 'O King, all that thou doest is contrary to law,' saying which he withdrew. The King retired in violent fury to his private apartments, while the kazy, having reached his home, made his will, and sat patiently and resigned, awaiting the arrival of the executioner."

We have transcribed this passage from Colonel Brigg's excellent historical work, as furnishing a striking illustration not merely of the individual character of Sultan Alla, but of the manners of his age and country. Nor is the conclusion of the story less curious than its commencement. "On the following day," says Ferishta, "contrary to his expectation, the King sent for the kazy, and received him with great kindness. He conferred on him a handsome gold-embroidered vest, and a purse of 1000 tomans, and said, 'although I have not had the advantage of reading books like yourself, I can never forget that I was born the son of a Mussulman, and while I am quite prepared to admit the truth of all you say, yet, if the doctrines which you call law were put in practice, they alone would not answer the purpose of government, and more particularly such a government as this of Hindostan. Unless severe punishments were inflicted for crimes, they could never be checked; so that while I act with vigour in all such cases, according to the best of my judgment, I place reliance on God, that if I have erred, the door of mercy will be open to me a repentant sinner.'"

We have said, that in the administration of what he chose to term justice, Alla was stern and inflexible, sacrificing life with the utmost indifference, and confiscating property on the most trivial occasions. There was no act of his government, however, which exhibited his cruelty in a more striking light than his treatment of a body of Mogul refugees. It has been already stated, that numbers of that people took service from time to time in the army of the Sultan of Hindostan. Their influence be-

came at last so extensive, that the sovereign himself stood in awe of it; and Alla, with a barbarous policy, determined to rid himself of the grievance. With this view, he discharged, by a single proclamation, every Mogul from his service. Some of the miserable men thrown thus loose upon the world, exhibited, as might have been expected, symptoms of violent indignation; upon which Alla, with the utmost coolness, commanded them all to be put to death. The decree was carried instantly into execution; and though but few were shown to be implicated in the sedition complained of, "15,000 of those unhappy wretches lay dead in the streets of Delhi in one day, and all their wives and children were enslaved."

Not all the natural sternness of his temper, however hindered Alla from becoming, like other eastern princes, the slave of a favourite. Mullik Kafoor, an eunuch, originally a slave, gradually obtained so great an ascendency over him, that he was entrusted with the highest and most responsible commands. These Kafoor of course exercised for the furtherance of his own views; and after enriching himself with the plunder of the Deccan, against which he led an army with distinguished good fortune, he applied himself to the task of sowing dissention, in the family of his master. He was eminently successful here, and deceiving Alla, whose constitution was worn out by a long indulgence in sensual pleasures, into a belief that his wife and sons were plotting against his life, he easily persuaded him to sign an order for their imprisonment. Then followed the secret assassination of such of the nobles as were sus-

pected of an inclination to oppose his ulterior views, and last of all the administration of poison to the monarch himself. Thus died Alla, one of the most powerful and arbitrary monarchs, that ever filled the Indian throne; and thus was the throne itself again left at the disposal of an upstart and a murderer.

Though it was the intention of Kafoor to assume in his own person the royal authority, he judged it prudent, at first, to proceed with extreme caution. He produced a forged will, which appointed Oomur Khan, the youngest of Alla's sons, his successor, and though the child had attained barely to his seventh year, he was immediately placed upon the musnud. In the mean while the eyes of two of his elder brothers were put out, and the Sultana, his mother, committed to more close confinement; whilst all the affairs of state were administered by Kafoor, acting in the capacity of Regent. The sway of the Eunuch, however, was not long endured by the people of Delhi. Alla left behind him a fourth son, by name Moobarik, whom the slave likewise caused to be arrested, and whom he ordered to be privately despatched; but the assassins relenting at the moment when they had entered his apartment for the purpose, a revolution immediately occurred which cost Kafoor his life. He was slain by his own guards, within the brief space of thirty-five days from the death of Alla, and Moobarik, his intended victim, became immediately invested with the Regency.

It was scarcely to be expected under any circumstances, that the elder would submit quietly

to the rule of the younger brother, and hence when Moobarik, at the end of two months, thought fit to assert his birth-right, no opposition was made to the movement by the Omras. The infant prince was quietly set aside, and the Regent mounted the throne in his room. But Moobarik possessed none of the qualities necessary to the administration of such an empire as that of Delhi. Vicious in his inclinations and mean in his understanding, he speedily disgusted his people, by a display at one moment of injudicious lenity, and at another of excessive harshness. One of his first measures, after the assumption of supreme power, was to put to death two of the officers of his own guard, who had been mainly instrumental in bringing about his elevation, on the wretched pretext that they presumed too much on their services. He then raised to the highest offices, and chose as his confidential friends, men whose chief merits lay in their obsequiousness; and he took so little trouble in the management of public affairs, that disorder and violence every where prevailed. In his private proceedings, again, he was the slave of every vice, which has a tendency to degrade human nature. He gave himself up entirely to wine and revelry, and "condescended so far as to dress himself often like a common actress, and go with the public women to dance at the houses of the nobility." At other times he would lead a gang of abominable prostitutes, half naked, along the terraces of the royal palaces, and oblige them to exhibit themselves before the nobles as they entered the court. As a necessary consequence, revolt followed revolt in rapid suc-

cession; but as these appear to have sprung rather from momentary impulse than from any settled or digested plan, Moobarik continued for a time to suppress them, and to indulge his cruelty in the punishment of their promoters.

In the present instance, however, as in many others, fate had decreed that the tyrant should receive the reward of his crimes at the hand of one of his own minions. There was a slave named Hussun, a Parriar, or outcast of Guzerat, in whose depraved society Mubarik took especial delight, and whom he promoted from one post of dignity to another, till he conferred upon him at last the office of vizier. That man, who had embraced the Mahomedan faith, and, together with his new rank, assumed the style of Mullik Koosrow, soon began to aspire at the crown itself; and the extreme infatuation of his master readily afforded him the best opportunities of maturing his project. At his suggestion, many of the Omras who would have resisted his ulterior designs were disgraced; others, seeing that there was no safety for them in the capital, retired to the distant provinces, till there remained none about the court except a few sycophants, the creatures of the favourite as much from fear as from affection. But the most decisive stroke of all was the introduction into Delhi from Guzerat of 20,000 men belonging to his own cast, whom he loaded with favours, at the expense of the more deserving inhabitants. Every office of profit and trust was conferred upon these vermin, which bound them fast to Mullik Khoosrow's interests.

These preliminary steps being taken, Khoosrow,

whose designs began to be openly talked of, made haste, ere his master's suspicions should be roused, to carry them into execution. With this view, he persuaded the Sultan, during the progress of a lengthened debauch, to throw open the palace gates to a band of his followers, who entered the outer court under the pretext of taking part in the festivities. So far all things succeeded to his wish; but at the moment when matters had reached a crisis, Kazy Zea-ood Deen, one of the most learned men in the city, and who had been the king's tutor in his youth, gained access, and told him plainly that such a plot was in agitation. He advised immediate measures to be taken for the arrest of Khoosrow, and for instituting an inquiry into the truth; and he supported his argument by pointing out that should the rumour prove groundless, the minister would rise instead of falling in his master's good opinion. It is hard to say what result might have followed this conference, had not Khoosrow, who overheard it all, entered on the instant in a female dress; but the king no sooner beheld him than he rushed into his arms, and the warning offered by the kazy was forgotten.

On the following night, the Kazy, still suspicious of treason, could not go to rest, but walked out about midnight to see whether the guards were watchful. In his rounds he met one Mundul, Khoosrow's uncle, who engaged him in conversation. While this passed, a ruffian came silently behind, and, with a stroke of a sabre, laid him dead on the pavement: after he had shouted aloud "Treason! Treason! Murder and treason are on foot!" The alarm, however, spread—the guards

started up in confusion, and offered what resistance they could; but being attacked unexpectedly, and by superior numbers, they were soon overpowered.

In the meanwhile the King, roused by the tumult, demanded of Khoosrow, who slept in the same chamber, from what cause it arose. The villain got up, went out to the balcony, where he delayed some time, and then returned with a story that certain horses, belonging to the soldiers on duty, had broken loose, and were fighting. This satisfied Moobarik for the moment; but footsteps were presently heard as of men rushing furiously up the stair; and the clash of arms, mixed with shrieks and groans, speedily followed. Moobarik saw now that he was betrayed. He sprang from his bed, ran by a private passage towards the Harem, and would have escaped, had not Khoosrow followed and seized him by the hair; but even then he struggled hard for life. He dashed the slave to the ground, and was in the act of disentangling himself from his grasp, when the assassins burst in. The King was instantly despatched, and his head, being severed from the body, was cast into the court-yard below.

While these things were passing in the royal apartments, the guards, recovering from their panic, had renewed the contest with determined fury; and the conspirators were beginning to give way, when the fate of the Sultan was made known to both parties. Instantly the face of affairs was changed. The guards fled; and the traitors, securing the palace gates, committed, wherever they went, the wildest excesses. All the relatives

of Moobarik, both male and female, were put to death, and the family of Alla extirpated. In a word, there was no crime which men, heated by angry passions, can commit, which these ruffians failed to perpetrate. But the massacre came not to an end when weariness or some lingerings of pity induced them to hold their hands. The day no sooner dawned than Khoosrow commanded all the slaves and servants of the late Sultan, whom he had not already won over to his own party, to be slain in cold blood; whilst their wives and children were sold into slavery.

Having thus cut a way for himself to the musnud, Khoosrow made haste to ascend; but his reign was at once short and troubled. The whole empire rose immediately in rebellion, and Ghozy Beg Toghluk, governor of Lahore and Depalpoor, advancing at the head of a large army, defeated the usurper in two battles. From the last of these, which was fought in the outskirts of Delhi itself, he fled almost alone; and endeavoured to conceal himself in a tomb; but being discovered, he was dragged in triumph before the conqueror, who commanded him and his principal adherents to be executed. This event occurred on the 22d day of August, just five months from the date of Moobarik's murder; and the line of Alla being extinct, Ghozy-Beg-Toghluck was, by the unanimous suffrages of the people, raised to the throne.

CHAPTER V.

Accession of Toghluck—His successful Reign, and Death —Aluf Khan takes the name of Mahomed—His Ambition, Misgovernment, and Obstinacy—Dies and is succeeded by Feroze—His prosperous Reign—The confusion incident upon his Death—Timour—His Invasion—Its Consequences—Downfal of the Empire—Retarded by the Virtues of Khizr Khan—Mubarik—Bheilole—Sekunder—Ibrahim.

Ghozy, or Gheeas-ood-deen-Toghluck, the new sovereign of Delhi, and the founder of the third Afgan dynasty which flourished there, was the son of a Toorky slave in the service of Bulbun, by a woman of the Jut tribe, or cultivators of Lahore. We have no account of the means by which he raised himself from obscurity to rank; but if it be fair to judge of a man's conduct at one period in his career from the tenor of his proceedings at another, Toghluck was not indebted to any dishonourable dealings for his elevation. As a sovereign he displayed in no ordinary degree the virtues of firmness, moderation, and equity. He regulated the affairs of state, which had fallen into disorder, in so satisfactory a manner, as to obtain general esteem. He repaired the old palaces and fortifications, built others, and encouraged commerce. Men of genius and learning were invited

to his court, and a code of laws for the civil government was framed, founded upon the Koran, and consistent with the ancient usages of the Delhi monarchy.

The reign of Toghluck however, though both just and popular, was by no means one of quiet. Numbers of Mahomedan viceroys and chiefs, as well as several tributary Rajas, encouraged by the late troubles, were in rebellion—against whom he directed his arms with memorable success, while he added to the extent of the empire by the capture of Wurungole, a place which had long defied the best efforts of his predecessors. It fell, after a protracted and obstinate resistance, to Aluf Khan, Toghluck's eldest son, and the kingdom of Telingana, of which it was the capital, was annexed to the empire. But Toghluck himself did not long enjoy his triumphs. Returning from a successful expedition against an insurrectionary governor of Bengal, the emperor was met in the plain near Delhi by his son, who had erected a large wooden edifice, under the shelter of which a magnificent feast was prepared. Toghluck entered without hesitation, when the roof falling in, he perished with several of his attendants, after a reign of four years and nine months.

Aluf Khan, who had for some time previous been declared heir apparent to the throne, took on his father's demise the name of Mahomed, and seems to have been one of the most contradictory characters that ever held the reins of government. In private life he was generous to profusion; a lover of literature, in which he attained to some eminence; not merely temperate, but abstemious;

and a strict observer of religious exercises. In his public capacity again he was cruel and vindictive, oppressive, tyrannical, and capricious. He was brave, and not unskilful in war; but both his bravery and his skill were principally displayed in attempts to suppress insurrections which his misgovernment had produced. The consequence was that during his reign the empire underwent more numerous convulsions than it had ever sustained before, from the effects of which it cannot be said to have recovered till long after it passed into the hands of a new race of sovereigns.

Few princes appear to have indulged more freely in dreams of ambition than Mahomed Toghluck. After purchasing the retreat of a band of Moguls, whom he found himself too weak to oppose in the field, he began to devise schemes of almost universal conquest; and he so far carried his projects into effect, that he made himself master of almost all the open country between the Nerbudda and the Krishna. He next despatched a body of 100,000 horse though the Nepaul country to effect the subjugation of China; but of the unfortunate individuals who composed it, scarce one returned to tell the fate of his comrades. Equally abortive were the schemes which he devised for the conquest of Transoxiana and Khorassan; yet so great was the expense incurred in making preparations for these expeditions, that he was driven to the adoption of a line of policy which shook his power to the foundation. He debased the currency, by the substitution of copper, at an artificial value, for the gold and silver coinage of the empire—a measure which brought ruin upon persons of all

ranks, and speedily embarrassed the government itself. These proceedings, superadded to various displays of tyranny, so disgusted his subjects, that almost every viceroy raised the standard of revolt; and civil war, in its most hideous form, prevailed from one corner of the empire to another.

But perhaps there was no measure of Mahomed's government which so thoroughly alienated the affections of the people at large, as his insane attempt to transplant the inhabitants of Delhi to the city of Dowlatabad. Having been particularly struck with the position of the latter place, which he visited as a conqueror in pursuit of one of his rebel viceroys, the king formed the unaccountable determination of establishing there the seat of his power; and, to give to the new capital a more worthy appearance, he issued orders that Delhi should be abandoned. With the most rigorous exactitude the decree was carried into execution. Delhi was left, says Ferishta, to the owls and to the bats—though multitudes of all conditions, ages and sexes, perished in consequence by famine and exposure to the weather.

Now it was that the effects of misrule began to show themselves in the most glaring forms. The provinces, one after another, threw off the yoke. Mooltan set the example, which was quickly followed by Bengal; and these were but imperfectly reduced, when Telingana declared itself independent. Mahomed hurried thither at the head of a large army; but a pestilence breaking out in the camp, he was forced to retire, leaving Wurungole in possession of the rebels. In the meanwhile, so grievous was the weight of taxation, that the fertile

country between the Jumna and the Ganges, was deserted by its inhabitants, who burned their houses and retired to the woods. A famine soon followed, which swept off multitudes of persons about Delhi and the neighbouring provinces; whilst the Afgans from their mountains devastated Mooltan, and the Guckurs ravaged Pujaub and Lahore. It was to no purpose that the Sultan, overcome by his fears, had recourse to superstition, sending to the representative of the Prophet for a confirmation of his rights. These rights failed to be asserted, because they had too long been abused; and Mahomed soon found that it was more easy to raise up enemies by misconduct than to subdue them by violence.

In spite of the many difficulties by which he was surrounded, this singular man seems never to have lost his presence of mind, nor to have acted on any occasion in a manner unworthy of the chivalrous courage with which nature had gifted him. Though the Rajas of Telingana and the Carnatic, entering into a confederacy together, expelled the Mahomedans from every part of the Deccan, except the city of Dowlatabad—and though, in addition to his other enemies, the governor of Oude declared against him—Mahomed scorned to alter his line of policy. He was determined to rule by force, or not to rule at all, and fortune did not wholly forsake him. The governor of Oude he overthrew in a great battle—took him prisoner, and forgave him. It was a rare instance of clemency on his part, but it was not thrown away. He then marched several armies into the Deccan, which he laid waste in all directions, and which he

might perhaps have reduced, had not disturbances broken out elsewhere. But when in the midst of a career of victory, he was suddenly called into Guzerat by the rebellion of the bravest and hardiest of his own troops—the Afgan and Tartar mercenaries, whom, under Mogul leaders, he employed to keep that province in subjection. They retreated on his approach into the Deccan, took Dowlatabad by surprise, and maintained themselves there; nor was he permitted to press the siege, because he was almost immediately diverted from it by fresh disturbances in his rear. He hurried back into Guzerat, gained more victories, but reaped from them no permanent advantage; for ere he could settle the affairs of that province, he was seized with an illness of which he died. He reigned in all twenty-seven years, with a reputation as little to be envied as that of any sovereign of India.

There chanced to be in the camp when Mahomed expired one of his cousins, named Feroze, to whom he had ever been partial, and whom he had recommended to the nobles as his successor. This prince immediately proclaimed himself emperor; and though a feeble attempt was made to set up a rival in the person of a child of doubtful parentage, he succeeded without difficulty in making good his claim. Feroze proved to be a wise and a just ruler—but he was quite incompetent to restore to the empire that unity which the errors of his predecessor had dissolved. The Deccan threw off the yoke entirely; and a formidable Mahomedan kingdom arose there, which flourished during several centuries. In like man-

ner Bengal became a separate principality, nor was Feroze able to assert more than a nominal superiority over it. But though thus straitened in the limits of his sovereignty, the Sultan paid so much attention to the internal affairs of the provinces that remained, that under no other ruler are they represented to have enjoyed an equal degree of prosperity. He repealed a variety of arbitrary taxes, and encouraged agriculture by lowering the duties imposed upon it, and by constructing numerous water-courses. In a word—if he cannot be accounted one of the greatest, he deserves to be numbered among the best of the Mahomedan kings of Delhi; and he enjoyed the rare good fortune of living to an advanced age, as well as of dying peaceably in his bed.

Even Feroze, however, in spite of his many virtues, was far from being exempt from the trials to which his elevated station exposed him. It required all the energy of which he was possessed, to maintain order among the governors of the provinces still left; and more than once he was called upon to take the field against men who owed their rise to his partiality. But the most distressing of all the plots devised against his person and government, was one to which his eldest son had well nigh fallen a victim. When age and infirmities begun to press heavily upon him, his vizier, Khan Jehan, became so absolute that the king was guided by him in almost every particular; and the villain made use of his influence to inspire his master with a suspicion that the Prince Mahomed Khan had conspired to take away his life. Immediate orders were issued for the apprehension of the

supposed culprit, who escaped death only by making his way into the palace, under the concealment of his wife's palanquin. Here he succeeded in convincing his father that he had been maligned; and the old man, overcome with joy, fell upon his neck and wept.

It was very natural under such circumstances that an affectionate parent should hasten to make amends for the injury which he had done to his child. Feroze unfortunately went too far in this respect; for he not only gave up the vizier to the vengeance of Mahomed, but associated him with himself in the government. Now Mahomed was too much the slave of pleasure to wield with a steady hand the power entrusted to him; and the immediate consequence of the old monarch's abdication was, that a formidable rebellion broke out. Two of Mahomed's cousins, the princes Baha-ood-Deen and Kummel-ood-Deen, put themselves at the head of an army of insurgents which marched to Delhi, and engaged the royal forces in the streets of that city. The battle raged with great fury, till the aged king was brought out by the populace and placed between the two armies, when the followers of Mahomed conceiving that he designed to resume the crown, immediately deserted their chief. Mahomed fled to the mountains of Surmore, and Feroze, now in his ninetieth year, re-ascended the musnud. He did not, however, retain possession many days. Having nominated the Prince Gheias-ood-Deen, his grandson, and the son of Futteh Khan, as his successor, Feroze died, to the great grief of his subjects.

The reign of this prince, which lasted no more

than five months, presents one continued series of public confusion and private profligacy. Not only Mahomed, but his own brother and cousin took up arms against him, and as he possessed neither courage nor cunning, he soon fell a victim to their violence. He was slain in a scuffle on the 18th of February, 1389, and the crown seized by Aboo Bukr, another of Feroze's grandsons by the Prince Zuffur Khan. Nor was he in any respect more fortunate, if he was less vicious than his predecessor. Mahomed, the exile, having collected a numerous army, advanced from the fortress of Nagracote, where he had lately found shelter, and after suffering numerous defeats and repulses, at last succeeded in driving his rival from the throne. Aboo Bukr was eventually made prisoner, and shut up in the fort of Meerut, where he died.

Mahomed, thus restored to the throne, continued to occupy it, amid rebellions and civil wars, till the year 1394; he then died of a fever, and his eldest son, Hoomayoon, a prince of great promise, survived him little more than a month. The sceptre passed in consequence into the hands of a mere boy, named Mahmood, and the Omras availing themselves of the opportunity, threw off their allegiance in great numbers. One of them, by name Khwaja Jehan, though holding the office of Vizier, quitted the court and proclaimed himself sovereign in Bengal. Another, Sarung Khan, after repelling the Gukkurs from Mooltan, set up as king of that province, and of Lahore, whilst the capital itself became the scene of a desperate struggle, which endured with little interruption during three years. As a matter of course, every

other district caught the infection, till there were almost as many independent principalities in Hindostan as there had been Soubahdarries. But an event at this time occurred which opened the way to mighty changes—we allude to the irruption, across the Indus, of a body of Moguls, under the renowned Timour or Tamerlane, a chief whose descendants were destined, after raising the empire to its highest pitch of greatness, to sink into the condition of pensioners on the bounty of a company of English merchants.

This extraordinary man was born in the village of Sebzar, forty miles to the south of Samarkand, where his ancestors, who enjoyed the rank of commanders of ten thousand horse, had for some generations possessed a local authority. His birth was cast at one of those revolving periods in the history of Asiatic sovereignties, when the long enjoyment of power having extinguished all manly virtues in the descendants of an active usurper, the power of the state became dissolved, and a way was opened for the elevation of some new and daring adventurer.

About thirty years previously the kingdom of Persia had undergone a species of revolution, by which almost every province was erected into an independency, and the whole became divided into a number of petty states. From nearly the same period the kingdom of Zagatai, or Samarcand, including Transoxiana, Khorassan, Bactria, Canduhar, and Cabul, had been the prize for which a succession of usurpers contended; the Mogul throne of Tartary and China, if less violently, was nevertheless greatly reduced in power, and the

Afgan empire of Delhi was in a state of dissolution. Such was the aspect of affairs throughout a large portion of Asia, when Timour appeared upon the stage, with powers, both of mind and body, fully adequate to take advantage of the opening presented.

The early youth of Timour was spent amid scenes of war, in which he exhibited so much courage and talent, that, at the age of five-and-twenty, he had fixed upon himself the best hopes of his countrymen. His first efforts were directed against certain Tartar bands, which, on the breaking up of the government, poured down upon Samarcand. These, after a protracted struggle, he succeeded in expelling; and he was raised, as the reward of his valour, at the age of thirty-four, to the undivided sovereignty of his liberated country. But Timour was too much the slave of ambition to rest satisfied with the throne of Samarcand. After recovering all the provinces over which his predecessors, in the plenitude of their power, had ruled, he burst into Persia, penetrated as far as Bagdad, and drove the Caliph from his throne. Mesopotamia next felt the weight of his arms; and finally passing into Tartary through the defiles of Mount Caucasus, he reduced no inconsiderable portion of it to obedience.

Having delayed here only till his conquests were in some degree consolidated, Timour returned to Samarcand, from whence he made preparations for the invasion of Hindostan. These were soon completed, and in the year 1397 he began his march towards the Indus. After penetrating, not without difficulty, that stupendous ridge of hills which se-

parates Hindostan from the regions of the north, Timour arrived at Cabul, where he halted a brief space to refresh his troops. He then marched upon Attock, where the passage of the Indus was made good, and immediately commenced operations as in an enemy's country. It is not worth while to describe these in detail. Wherever he appeared, victory declared in his favour. Battles were won and towns captured, with terrible loss to the vanquished; indeed the route of the invaders might be traced by villages ruined, fields laid waste, and the corpses of their owners blackening in the sun. Of all the visitations which Hindostan ever suffered, this of Timour appears to have been the most awful; for he spared neither age nor sex, till he had rendered the frontier provinces little better than a desert.

Timour can hardly be said to have drawn bridle till he arrived at Delhi itself. The city was, as may be imagined, thrown into the utmost disorder; for men, women, and children, from all quarters, flocked towards it, filling every street and ally with the most alarming accounts of the ferocity and invincibility of the invader. It was to no purpose that the imbecile Mahmood took the field at the head of his effeminate and panic-struck army. He was defeated in every skirmish, till, despairing of effectual resistance, he at last abandoned the place, together with the chief of his courtiers and ministers. No further opposition was offered by the people thus deserted. Timour entered with the step of a conqueror, and the capital was almost immediately given up to indiscriminate plunder. The historians of those times dwell

with horrible minuteness upon the excesses of which a brutal soldiery were guilty. The very streets are said to have been choaked up with the bodies of the slain; and little, except what was called the new town, escaped the fury of the flames.

Timour caused himself to be proclaimed emperor of Hindostan, but his sojourn amid the ruins of its devoted capital exceeded not fifteen days. After receiving the submission of most of the Soubahdars and governors, almost all of whom he confirmed in their provinces, he put his columns in motion towards the north, subduing and laying utterly waste the whole of the country on both sides of the Ganges, as far as the mountains, among which that river takes its rise. He then wheeled to the left, scoured the bottom of the range towards Cabul, and returned loaded with spoil and incumbered with captives to Samarcand.

The departure of Timour from Hindostan was the signal for a renewal of those feuds and quarrels among its nobles, which his iron presence had for an instant repressed. Mahmood returned indeed to Delhi, which, in a short time, began once more to assume the appearance of a royal city; but he never recovered even the slight influence which he once possessed over his turbulent Omras. The empire became in consequence absolutely broken up. "Guzerat," says Ferishta, "was held by Moozuffur Khan; Malwa, by Delawar Khan; Kunowj, Oude, Kurra, and Soonpoor, by Kwaja Jehan, commonly called Shah Shurk; Lahore, Depalpoor, and Multan, by Khizr Khan; Samana, by Ghalib Khan; Byana, by Shums Khan; Ahdy Kalpy, and Mahoba, by Mahomed Khan, the son

of Mullikzada Feroze; all of whom styled themselves kings." Among these, moreover, civil wars were continually waged, during which the emperor was enlisted, sometimes upon one side, sometimes upon another; but being totally destitute of talent, he seems not to have made so much as an effort to turn their animosities to his own advantage. He died at Kyetuhl of a fever, contracted during a hunting expedition, after a disgraceful reign of twenty years; and with him expired the third or last of the Afgan dynasties which swayed the sceptre of Delhi.

Reduced as the power of the emperor was, the title seems still to have offered a temptation to the ambitious, and we accordingly find that the demise of Mahmood was followed by a contest for that empty dignity. It ended in favour of Khizr Khan, the Governor or King of Mooltan, who, after dethroning one Dowlas Khan, Lody, the private secretary of Mahmood, was solemnly inaugurated in the month of June, 1414. This prince, who claimed the honour of belonging to the race of the Prophet, though destitute neither of courage nor vanity, was too prudent to affect a loftier style, than was attached to the vicegerent of the house of Timour. Though the mighty conqueror himself had paid the debt of nature some years previously, his son Shiroch still held the reins with an energy worthy of his descent; and partly because he desired not to attract the animosity of that monarch, partly because he perceived that his present was more acceptable to the Omras than a prouder title, Khizr prudently declined to place his own image upon the coins of Hindostan. The consequence was, that

he reestablished, in a considerable degree, the power of the imperial throne. He made little progress, it is true, in restoring the more remote provinces; but he reigned from the farthest branch of the Indus to the extremity of the Doab, and from the Cashmere and Himalaya mountains to the latitude of Gualiar and Agra.

Khizr Khan died at Delhi on the 20th of May, 1421, deeply regretted by all classes of his subjects, to whom his justice, his generosity, and his benevolence had greatly endeared him. He was succeeded by his son Moobarik, whom he had himself nominated as his heir; and whose good qualities, both in the camp and cabinet, rendered him not unworthy of that honour. Moobarik was involved in many wars, sometimes with his rebellious governors, and sometimes with his neighbours. He displayed very considerable talent in the conduct of these, and his administration at home was not less fortunate than his struggles abroad. He was strictly just, leaned generally to the side of mercy, and was, in consequence, an object of veneration to his subjects. But Moobarik seems not to have possessed the high mind of his father. Becoming jealous of the Vizier, Suroor-ool Mulk, who had done the state some service, he displayed his feelings in a manner so offensive, that the haughty minister could not brook the insult; and, hiring a band of assassins, he caused the king to be murdered while in the act of paying his devotions in one of the mosques. This event, which occurred in the year 1435, called forth sincere lamentations from the populace, by whom the king had been particularly esteemed.

The Vizier had not rushed into his present position under the impulse of blind rage. He had, on the contrary, made arrangements which he flattered himself would place the substance, and in due time the shadow, of authority, in his own hands; and hence, on the very day of the assassination, Mahomed, the imbecile son of the deceased, was proclaimed king. But, subtle as he had hitherto shown himself, the Vizier proceeded with little caution in the further maturing of his plans. He seized, without hesitation, the regalia, the treasures, and the other effects of his sovereign; he dismissed all the old ministers from office, that he might fill their places with creatures of his own; and he bore himself generally with such arrogance towards the nobles, that their pride became alarmed. A conspiracy was immediately entered into both against him and the Emperor. Troops were raised on both sides, and the royalists, after an ineffectual effort to keep the field, were driven within the fortress of Sory. The king now saw, that if he persisted in supporting his minister, his own ruin would be unavoidable; he, therefore, entered into negotiations with the besiegers, and waited only for a convenient opportunity either of making his escape or cutting off the Vizier. But his designs eluded not the penetrating eye of that individual; a counterplot was in consequence formed, and it remained to be seen which of the two should fall a victim to the guile of the other. The matter remained not long in doubt. The Vizier, bursting into his master's apartment at a moment when he believed him to be alone, was surprized to find an armed guard ready to receive him, and he and his

followers were cut to pieces ere they could well stand on their own defence.

For a little while after the death of Seeroor-ool-Moolk, Mahomed swayed the sceptre with at least the semblance of authority; but being a weak prince, and devoted to pleasure, troubles soon began to arise. Bheilole Lody, of Surhind, a town on the Sutledge, or eastern branch of the Indus, took possession of Lahore, the greater part of the Punjaub, and the country southward, as far as Paniput. An army was sent against him, which drove him from the plains, but the royal forces were no sooner withdrawn than he descended from the mountains with additional force, and reinstated himself in his conquests. A fresh attempt was made to expel him, which failed; and commotions breaking out in other quarters at the same time, the timid Mahomed was fain to make peace on the terms proposed by the insurgent. By this means he was enabled to turn Bheilole's arms against those of the King of Malwa, who had invaded his country, and threatened the very capital. An indecisive action ensued, in which Bheilole's division alone did its duty, the rest retreating almost at the first onset; upon which Mahomed became so much alarmed, that, regardless of the remonstrances of his new confident, he sent to offer terms. Though these were gladly accepted, Bheilole, who despised his master, paid to the treaty no regard. He attacked the King of Malwa on his march homewards, put his troops to the rout, and plundered him of all his baggage.

Bheilole was rewarded for his services on this occasion by receiving a royal confirmation in the

rank which he owed to successful rebellion. He was then commanded to lead an expedition against the Gukkurs, a race of plunderers which still continued to infest the low countries in their own vicinity; but the army which he was permitted to embody for this purpose, he employed in a very different service. He marched upon Delhi, to which he laid siege; but it held out so long, that for the present he was compelled to abandon his enterprise. He then fell back upon Lahore, where he maintained himself as an independent sovereign during the remainder of Mahomed's life.

That weak prince, after a reign of twelve years and nine months, died, leaving the crown to Alla, a prince still less worthy to wear it than his father. The latter enjoyed his empty dignity little more than four years, during which interval he contrived to render himself so contemptible, that when Bheilole resumed his attempt with better success than before, he did not even condescend to deprive his rival of life. On the contrary, he permitted him to reside in retirement at Budaoon, a city which he had founded, and to which he was childishly attached; whilst he himself mounted the throne, which Alla willingly resigned to him. But Bheilole's was not a reign either of inaction or inglory. Like his early career it was marked by the display of considerable talent and great good fortune; indeed there is no monarch of Delhi whose whole life partook more largely of the character of romance than his.

Bheilole was a member of the Afgan tribe of Lody, which originally earned some wealth by carrying on a commerce between Persia and Hindos-

tan. He came into the world as Julius Cæsar is represented to have done; for his mother perished by the falling in of a house, and the infant was saved only by the promptitude with which his father caused the body of his dead wife to be opened. It is related of him, that when a youth he was permitted to pay his respects to a celebrated Dervish of Samana, by name Sheida. While sitting in a respectful posture before this holy man, the latter suddenly called aloud, as if inspired, "Who will give 2000 rupees for the kingdom of Delhi?" Bheilole replied that he possessed no more than 1600 rupees; but ordering his servant to fetch them, he offered them to the Dervish. "Be thou king, my son," said the old man, accepting the money, and laying his hand upon the child's head. The companions of Bheilole turned the transaction into ridicule, but he gravely said, "that if the matter came to pass he had made a cheap purchase, if not, the blessing of a holy man could do no harm."

Bheilole rose, like other oriental adventurers, by the display of dauntless courage, great liberality, and a thorough contempt for every thing like principle. The first of these qualities gained him the respect, the second won for him the favour of his countrymen, and by means of the third he contrived to make all accidents, no matter from what source they might originate, tend to his own advancement. Thus it was that he came first to gain by usurpation from his cousin, the government of Surhinde, which he gradually exchanged for that of Lahore and Punjaub, nor did he pause in his progress till the prediction of the aged Dervish had

received its fulfilment. It is but just to add, that if he won a crown somewhat unfairly, he possessed in no ordinary degree the energy required to wear it. He not only suppressed every inclination to revolt, but defeated, in a great battle, the King of Joonpoor, who had marched to support the disaffected; and once more, after several campaigns, caused the bounds of the empire to extend from the Indus to the frontiers of Bengal. Bheilole reigned in all thirty-eight years, during the whole of which he was eminently prosperous.

After a brief consultation among the nobles, Sekunder, the second son of Bheilole, was appointed to succeed his father; and the talents which he displayed during a reign of upwards of twenty-eight years, were such as fully to justify the selection. He was much in the field; for the Soubahdars no sooner became aware of Bheilole's death, than they aimed as usual at independence; and he pushed his conquests over both foreign and domestic enemies, farther than had been done even by his immediate predecessor. But the most remarkable event which occurred in his reign (for war and conquest constituted but the daily business of the kings of Delhi,) was a great earthquake in Agra, which, on the 5th of July, 1505, shook the very mountains to their basis, and overthrew whole towns and many temples. "Several thousand inhabitants," says Ferishta, "were buried under the ruins; nor has such an earthquake ever been experienced in India before or since." It is recorded of this prince, that he caused a formal dispute to be held between a certain number of the most learned of the Kazis, and a Brahmin, who had been

so infatuated as to assert, in the hearing of some of the faithful, that "the religions both of the Moslems and Hindoos, if acted on with sincerity, were equally acceptable to God." There was a tremendous array of the faithful opposed to the solitary worshipper of Brahma; yet it appears that all their arguments failed to convince him. The consequences may be anticipated. "The learned men were of opinion that unless the infidel should renounce his error, and adopt Mahommedanism, he should suffer death; and as the Hindoo refused to apostatise, he was immediately executed."

Sekunder seems to have been a determined bigot to his religion. He is particularly applauded by Ferishta for the zeal with which he overthrew the temples of the idolators, wherever his victorious arms extended; nay, he went so far as to depose one of his own Soubahdars, because that officer professed his belief, that the worshippers of Brahma were not necessarily heirs of damnation. In spite of these defects, however, which attached rather to the age than to the man, he seems to have been a humane as well as a great prince; and when he died he was lamented with sincerity by the people over whom he had presided.

Sekunder left behind him several sons, the eldest of whom, by name Ibrahim, immediately ascended the throne. He was brave and by no means deficient in abilities; but he was likewise rash, headstrong, cruel, and unforgiving. The first years of his reign were disturbed by an attempt on the part of one of his brothers, Julal Khan, to establish an independent sovereignty at Joonpoor. After a protracted contest, Julal was defeated and taken;

when his remorseless relative commanded him, with his principal adherents, to be put to death. Another of his brothers, by name Alla, was forced to seek a refuge from his barbarity at Cabul; whilst the affections of almost all the chiefs belonging to his own tribe were alienated by the general haughtiness of his manners and the contempt in which he affected to hold them. Nothing but an extraordinary share of courage, supported by great conduct in the field, could have enabled him to keep his seat under such circumstances; yet he did keep it in spite of numerous efforts to displace him; nay, he even extended his conquests over several Hindoo Rajahs, who, up to the present times, had refused to wear the yoke. But there came against him, in the end, an enemy whom he found it impracticable to oppose; we allude to Baber, a descendant of the great Tamerlane, who, in the year 1526, deprived him at once of his empire and his life.

CHAPTER VI.

Extent of the Mahomedan Conquests — Baber — His Early History, and Conquest of Hindostan—Hoomayoon expelled—Sheer Shah—His Wars—Gallantry of the Rajpoots—Accession of Selim—Return of Hoomayoon, Akbar, Jehanghire, Shah Jehan, Arungzebe.

Before entering upon that section of Indian History which may be said to take its commencement from the accession of Baber, it is necessary to say a few words touching the extent of the Mahomedan conquests in general, more especially of that portion of them which bears upon the political condition of the Deccan, and of the regions south of the Deccan.

Though we have hitherto spoken of the authority of the Emperor of Delhi as acknowledged from the Indus to the Brahmapootra in one direction, and, prior to the convulsions which occurred in Mahmood's reign at least, from the borders of Nepaul to the latitude of Wurungole in another, the reader is by no means to believe that the whole extent of country lying within these extreme lines, ever was, or ever was assumed to be, reduced to the obedience of a Mahomedan master. There were, on the contrary, numerous districts in Hindostan proper, particularly in Ajmere, Malwa, Agra, and Allahabad, which to the last asserted their

independence,—nay, Bengal, Bahar, Oude, Lahore, and Delhi itself, were never entirely purged of stubborn patriots. Wherever a tract of country, indeed, presented the semblance of defensibility, wherever mountains or morasses held out the prospect of effective resistance, thither one or more Hindoo tribes, guided by their native Rajahs, retired; and there they continued to sustain themselves, with extraordinary resolution, against all the efforts of their ruthless invaders.

If we confine our attention to that portion of India, indeed, which is bounded on the south by the river Nerbudda, though we may discover numerous detached hordes, which existed in this condition to the end, we shall observe no trace later than the accession of Alla-ood Deen, of any power competent seriously to affect the tranquillity of the Mahomedan empire. The case is widely different when we pass beyond the Nerbudda—of the country lying to the south of which not even the descendants of Timour ever accomplished the entire subjugation. Independently of the three great kingdoms of Travancore, Malabar, and South Canara, which, till the middle of the eighteenth century, owned no allegiance to a foreign lord, there existed in the Deccan a variety of lesser states, which were brought into subjection only partially, and by slow and painful degrees.* It will tend considerably to the elucidation of the

* The reader must bear in mind that the term Carnatic is employed by the ancient historians of India in a much more extended sense than at present. It included of old a portion of Canara and Mysore, as well as the province on which we now exclusively bestow the epithet.

future details of this history, if we briefly run over the heads of those transactions which led to the establishment there of a state of things without a parallel in other quarters of India.

We stated, in a former part of this work, that the first Mussulman force which penetrated beyond the line of the Nerbudda, was commanded, in 1293, by Alla, the nephew, and afterwards the successor, of Feroze, the Afgan King of Delhi. As the booty obtained in that expedition offered powerful inducements to undertake another, Kafpoor again led an army southward in 1306, when the city of Deorghur, the modern Dowlatabad, was captured, and the Rajah Ram Due carried prisoner to Delhi. In 1310, the same Kafoor marched into Malabar,* defeated the troops of the Rajah Billal Deo, took the capital Dhoosoomooder, and returned to Delhi loaded with gold; and Dhoosoomooder being a second time taken and destroyed by Mahomed II. in 1326, the seat of the Hindoo government was removed to Toonoor. Thus was a species of insecure sovereignty established by the Emperor of Delhi over the plains and open districts, as far as the Toombuddra, which comprehended portions of the provinces now laid down upon the map as Arungabad, Bijapoor, Canara, and Mysore.

* It is to be observed, that whenever Ferishta makes mention of expeditions to Malabar, he alludes only to such operations as were carried on within the hilly belt which runs from Soonda to Corj; for it is certain that the Mahomedans never penetrated into South Canara and Malabar, though they may have extended from the side of Concan, as far into North Canara as Mergan, Ancola, and possibly even to Onore.

The extravagant fame of the riches of the south to which the plunder acquired in these expeditions gave rise, inflamed the cupidity of the northern invaders, and induced them to march against other Hindoo states. The Kingdom of Telungana was accordingly threatened, first by an eastern route, through Bengal, without effect, and latterly, with better fortune, by the western road, through Maharashta, or the country of the Mahrattas. On this occasion Wurungole fell, and a dynasty, which had lasted 256 years, was subverted. But though the Emperor of Delhi was thus acknowledged as chief paramount by the inhabitants of Hyderabad, he possessed little or no influence, as yet, in Kandesh, Berar, Bedar, or Gundwana, whilst a new Hindoo empire arose in Arungabad itself, which was destined, for upwards of two centuries more, to oppose a formidable barrier to the further progress of his arms. The empire to which we allude was that of Videyanuggar, Vijeyanuggur, or Bejnugger, of which the capital still exists, as a considerable city on the right bank of the Kishna.

In this state things continued, the Mahomedans making daily aggressions upon the native princes around them, till they had reduced some to entire subjection, and a still greater number to the rank of tributaries. Many indeed set their utmost efforts at defiance; the large district now known by the appellation of Gundwana, seems to have been governed to the last, by its Rajahs; whilst Maharashta, (including Kandesh, Berar and Beder, with portions of Bejapoor and Arungabad,) abounded with tribes more jealous of their freedom than their life. But in 1338 so great progress



Drawn by W. Westall A.R.A. from a sketch by Sir Colin Mackenzie *Engraved by E. Finden*

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NEAR THE GANGES.

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Drawn by W. Westall A.R.A. from a Sketch by Sir Colin Mackenzie — *Engraved by E. Finden.*

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NEAR THE GANGES

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again restored to something like their former level. Such was the condition of Southern India in the year 1523, when Baber commenced operations in Hindostan. Parcelled out, into five kingdoms, of which the sovereigns were Mahomedans—namely, Bejapoor, Golconda, Berar, Ahmednugger, and Beder—it supported at the same time a whole multitude of independent Hindoo states;—of which the most important in point both of extent and resources, lay towards the western extremity of the Peninsula.

Zehur-ood-Deen Mahomed, surnamed Baber, (the Tyger,) was born on the 14th of Feb., 1483. He was immediately descended, by the father's side, from the celebrated Timour or Tamerlane; his maternal lineage connected him with the no less celebrated Gingis Khan. From his earliest childhood he exhibited so much energy and talent, that his father who was Sultan of Indijan and Furghana, bestowed upon him at twelve years of age, the management of the former kingdom; and the Sultan dying soon afterwards in consequence of a fall from the roof of a pigeon-house, Baber, young as he was, seized the reins of government. He was immediately involved in a war with two of his uncles who, desiring to profit by his inexperience, invaded Furghana; but Baber maintained himself against them with great resolution, and a pestilence which affected the horses of the invaders, fortunately coming to his aid, he succeeded in compelling them to make peace. This done, Baber, whose ambition knew no bounds, hastened to make himself master of Samarcand. After a protracted struggle he was successful, and had actually mount-

ed the throne, when his brother raised against him the standard of revolt, and he found himself deprived of his paternal possessions at the moment when he had acquired a foreign kingdom. He hurried back to Furghana, but the rebel party was too strong for him. Even his own troops forsook him; and a violent illness seizing him at the same time, his affairs were reduced to the lowest ebb. Nevertheless, though compelled on his recovery, to lead the life of a fugitive, and attended by no more than a few hundred followers, Baber never despaired of ultimate greatness, and partly through his own perseverance, partly through the occurrence of one or two fortunate accidents, his dream became realized. A counter-revolution put him, when he least expected it, once more in possession of Indijan. He succeeded soon after in surprising Samarcand, and though driven out of it again by a band of Uzbek Tatars, he contrived to acquire and retain the sovereignty of Cabul. It was in this latter province that he assembled the force which won for him the throne of Delhi; and enabled him to found a dynasty more illustrious than all which had preceded it in Hindostan.

It is not necessary to the design of our present work, to give a minute detail of the many difficulties against which Baber was required to bear up. Let it suffice to state that, after overrunning a large portion of the Punjaub, levying contributions and chastising the Gukkurs, he was suddenly recalled from Lahore by the intelligence that the Tatars had appeared in Cashgar; and that Cabul itself was threatened with an invasion from the side of Candahar. He hastened back, and engaged

in immediate hostilities with Candahar, which, after a three years' doubtful and destructive war, he finally subdued.

Having thus freed himself from the apprehension of disturbance in his rear, Baber once more put his columns in motion towards Hindostan; and in the course of a single campaign made himself master of the whole Punjaub and Lahore. He halted here during the next season, whether from motives of policy or to refresh his troops does not appear, but in 1525, he again moved onwards. It will be recollected, that the utmost dissatisfaction prevailed at this time both in the court and among the troops of Ibrahim,—that the capricious tyrant, by wantonly outraging the feelings of those most intimately connected with himself, had driven his very brother to seek shelter at Baber's head-quarters, and that large numbers of the most influential persons in the empire daily followed the example. Yet Ibrahim took the field with his accustomed courage, followed by a numerous, if not a highly disciplined army, and attacking a detachment of Baber's troops, commanded by one of his generals, he defeated it. He was so much elated by this partial success, that he risked soon afterwards a general engagement at Paniput, in which his troops were put to the rout, and himself slain. Baber instantly pushed upon Delhi, entered without opposition, and caused himself to be proclaimed emperor with all due solemnity.

Though his progress to power had been both rapid and easy, Baber found that to maintain himself at the elevation to which he had attained, was a task of very considerable difficulty. The origi-

nal army with which he advanced from the Indus exceeded not 15,000 men; and the losses sustained in the operations which followed, had reduced it to 12,000. It is true that at first multitudes of the native soldiery flocked to his standard; for Ibrahim was an object of abhorrence to all classes, and in their desire to dethrone him, minor considerations were forgotten. But no sooner had Baber assumed the insignia of royalty, than the ancient jealousies between the Moguls and Afgans burst forth, and the chiefs of the latter tribe made haste to muster their followers and declare against him. An opinion, moreover, prevailed, that like his ancestor Tamerlane, he would abandon Delhi, after he had sufficiently plundered it; and the anxiety which he displayed to transfer the riches of that capital to his native-born people of Furghana, tended in no degree to produce a contrary persuasion. The consequence was, that for some years after his coronation, Baber was engaged in constant wars, not only with the Mahomedan governors or viceroys of provinces, but with various Hindoo Rajahs. It is worthy of remark too, that he entered upon them in direct contradiction to the counsels of the most faithful and attached of his own followers. These, beholding the strength of a confederacy, which had set up a son of the late Emperor Sekunder in opposition to their own master, earnestly advised him to decline a contest which offered no prospect of success; but Baber, declaring that he would never relinquish his new acquisitions, except with life, turned a deaf ear to their remonstrances. His chivalrous gallantry failed not of producing the best effects. Ably supported by

his son Hoomayoon, he overthrew the confederates in many battles, and in the course of less than five years, was in quiet possession of the utmost extent of territory over which his immediate predecessors had reigned. He died of a fever, just as he was preparing to carry his army into Bahar, and left the throne as yet but imperfectly established to the eldest of his three sons, the prince Hoomayoon.

The new sovereign was scarcely proclaimed, when he saw himself threatened from a quarter, where least of all he had a right to expect that danger would arise. His brother Kamran Mirza, whom Baber had left as governor in Cabul, advanced with an army into the Punjaub, and Hoomayoon, already encircled by as many difficulties as he found it convenient to encounter, was glad to purchase tranquillity by bestowing upon him the superintendence of the province. This step was the more necessary, that every day brought fresh enemies into the field. He had hardly time to defeat his father's rival Mahmood, the son of Sekunder, when Bahadur, king of Guzerat, declared war against him, and though in the struggle which ensued, Hoomayoon proved victorious, his victories seem to have been purchased at a dear rate. But, the most formidable of all his opponents was Sheer, the Afgan viceroy of Bahar. This man, who had recently added to his strength by usurping the government of Bengal, met Hoomayoon foot to foot; and though worsted in more than one encounter, was far from being subdued. On the contrary, when the treasonous proceedings of Hoomayoon's brothers rendered it necessary for that prince to hurry back into Delhi, Sheer, by judiciously throw-

ing his troops in the line of retreat, compelled him to enter into a convention. But his next proceeding, however politic and even usual in the East, was not in accordance with our notions of honourable warfare; he attacked the imperial camp when unguarded, on the faith of the armistice, and without either loss or hazard to himself, put the Mogul forces to the rout. With great difficulty Hoomayoon escaped alone to Agra, where it required all his energy to equip a fresh army, in sufficient time to meet the conqueror without the walls.

The return of Hoomayoon to his capital in a condition so deplorable, seems to have brought back his brothers for a brief space to a just sense of their duty. They saw that, like the bundle of rods in the fable, their best hope of safety lay in continuing united, and lent all the aid in their power towards raising and equipping a new army. But the policy of Eastern princes is seldom either steady or profound. Personal antipathies soon began to arise again among them; and long ere the emperor's preparations were complete, they fell off from their allegiance. One of them now entered into secret negotiations with Sheer Khan, who, at the head of 50,000 horse, was approaching; the other held aloof, with the design of attacking the victor, and wresting from him the fruits of his conquests. But the result was ruinous to all. Sheer Khan, after again defeating Hoomayoon, drove every member of his family beyond the Indus, and ascending the throne of Delhi, kept possession of it till his death.

The chief who thus succeeded in interrupting the line of succession in the house of Timour, was by lineage an Afgan of the tribe of Soor, and by birth

a Rohilla, or mountaineer of Peshawur. Possessed of great energy of character, and far from scrupulous as to the means by which a desired end could be obtained, he not only governed Delhi with singular address, but extended the bounds of the empire from the furthest branch of the Indus to the shores of the Bay of Bengal. It would appear, moreover, that his reign was not more glorious to himself than beneficial to his subjects. "He left behind him," according to Ferishta, "many monuments of his magnificence. From Bengal and Soonar-gam to the Indus, which is 1500 coss, (2000 miles,) he built caravanseras, and dug a well at the distance of every coss. Besides which he raised many magnificent mosques for the worship of God in the highway, wherein he appointed readers of the koran and moollas. He ordered that at every stage, all strangers, without distinction of country or religion, should be entertained according to their quality at the public expense; and he planted rows of fruit trees along the roads, as well to preserve travellers from the scorching rays of the sun, as to slake their thirst. Horse-posts were established at proper distances, as well for forwarding quick intelligence to government, as for the advantages of trade and correspondence. A similar establishment was also maintained from Agra to Mandoo, a distance of 300 coss, (450 miles,) fruit-trees being planted along the road-side, and musjids, caravanseras and wells, being also constructed at short distances from each other. Such was the public security during his reign, that travellers and merchants, depositing their property on the road-side, lay down to sleep without apprehension of robbery."

Sheer Shah, for such was the title which he assumed, was engaged in frequent contests with the Hindoo Rajahs of Malwa, Nagoor, and Ajmere. Towards the former he behaved with a degree of barbarous treachery unparalleled even in the annals of Mahomedan warfare. After granting to him and to his followers an honourable capitulation on the surrender of the strong fortress of Raisein, Sheer, at the instigation of "one of the wise men of the age," caused the Hindoo garrison to be attacked on their march, and cut off to a man, defending themselves with so much resolution, that, to use the words of Ferishta, "the deeds of Roostoom and Isfundyar might be deemed child's play." Nor was the method which he adopted to overcome Maldew, the Rajah of Ajmere, though less tragical in its immediate consequence, more justifiable in itself. That prince having encamped against him with an army of 50,000 Rajpoots, Sheer Shah, not daring to join battle, caused forged letters to be thrown in his way, by which a conviction was excited in the mind of Maldew that his subordinates were in treaty with the enemy. He immediately issued orders to fall back, in spite of the earnest remonstrances of his officers, whose eagerness to engage, indeed, added fresh strength to his suspicions. One of them, however, by name Koonbha, at length discovered the deception which had been put upon the Maha Rajah. After exerting himself strenuously, but without effect, to disabuse the mind of his sovereign, he adopted a resolution worthy of a Roman during the best ages of the republic. "Such treachery," said he, "is unprecedented among Rajpoots, and I am determined to

wash out the stain upon their reputation with my own blood, or with my own tribe alone to subdue Sheer Shah."

Maldew continued his retreat; but the gallant Koonbha and a few other chiefs put themselves at the head of ten or twelve thousand men, and turned back. It was their intention, by a night march, to come upon the Mahomedan camp by surprise; but unfortunately they lost their way, and daylight had already appeared ere they reached the enemy. Sheer Shah, instantly drew out to receive them. His force consisted of full 80,000 men, a large portion of whom were enured to danger, yet were they repulsed in several charges by this band of Rajpoots. At the moment, however, when victory seemed on the eve of declaring against them, a strong reinforcement arrived to the Mahomedans, which attacked the Rajpoots, wearied with fighting, not less than jaded by the exertions of the past night, and after a desperate resistance succeeded in breaking them. But they could not compel them to fly while a single squadron held together. They perished almost to a man, over the dead body of Koonbha.

The exultation of Sheer Shah at this victory was great in proportion to the alarm with which the progress of the battle had inspired him; but he did not live to reap the full advantage either of it, or of the successes which ensued upon it. He was slain, a few months after, at the siege of Runtunbhore, by the explosion of a powder-magazine, to which a shell from one of his own batteries set fire.

Sheer left behind him two sons, the younger of whom, being present with the army, immediately

claimed the throne. At first no opposition was made to this arrangement, but Selim (such was the name of the new sovereign) was scarcely returned to Agra, when the prince Adil began to form a party against him; and the sword, as usual, became the arbitrator between them. Selim was victorious, and Adil, disappearing after the battle, was never heard of more; but fresh enemies were not wanting. The Omrahs and Soubahdars taking advantage of the unsettled state of the times, rebelled in various quarters; and they were yet but imperfectly subdued, when Hoomayoon, the son of Baber, again took the field. On this occasion, however, Hoomayoon failed in effecting any thing; and Selim, after retaining possession of the empire for nine years, died.

It is not necessary to describe in detail the scenes of anarchy and misrule which followed this event. Moobarick Khan, the brother-in-law of Selim, after murdering his nephew in the arms of his own sister, made himself master of the royal treasury, and seized the crown; but his shameful prodigality, and utter neglect of public business, soon brought about their customary results. His brother Ibrahim raised an army, drove him from Delhi, and compelled him to seek an asylum in the eastern provinces. Ibrahim was in his turn assailed by Ahmed, another nephew of the emperor Sheer, who, after proclaiming himself King of Punjaub, assumed the style of Sekunder Shah, and marched against Delhi. The two princes came to an action, in which Ibrahim sustained a total defeat; and being again worsted by one of Moobarick's generals, he was driven, an exile and

a wanderer, into Bahar. Nor was the fate of Moobarick himself more prosperous. He perished in a fruitless attempt to erect the eastern provinces into a separate empire; thus leaving the crown to be worn, without a rival, by Sekunder Shah.

While the peace of Hindostan was thus disturbed by frequent revolutions, Hoomayoon, the son of Baber, was undergoing almost every variety of fortune to which a fugitive prince could be subjected. His flight to Persia, of which notice has already been taken, was attended by circumstances of no common interest. Closely pursued by a victorious enemy, he was driven, with a few faithful followers, and his wife far advanced in pregnancy, from place to place, till at last he sought protection from Maldew, Raja of Ajmere. That monarch, however, instead of affording shelter to the exile, would have seized and betrayed him, had not a Rajpoot soldier, who had formerly served Hoomayoon, made him acquainted with the treason intended; upon which he mounted his horse at midnight, and never drew rein till he had traversed a space of nearly two hundred miles.

The country through which the fugitives passed being a continuous desert of sand, both men and beasts suffered the utmost distress from want of water. Some went raving mad; others dropped down dead; screams and lamentations fell upon the ear in all directions;—while clouds of dust gave indication that the enemy were close upon their heels; and that, weak as they were with travel and thirst, the flight must, of necessity, be pursued. During the darkness of the night, Hoomayoon, with his wife and only twenty horsemen, had

become separated from the rest of the party. They were thus situated when the dawn showed to them a numerous body of pursuers close in their rear; and, as all hope of escape appeared fruitless, they resolved to sell their lives at as dear a rate as possible. Hoomayoon heading them, they accordingly wheeled round, and charged the enemy with such resolution, that, though ten times more numerous than the Moguls, they reeled from the shock; and a chance arrow happening at the instant to pierce the heart of their leader, they broke, and fled in all directions. Hoomayoon was not so imprudent as to attempt a pursuit, but gathering his gallant band about him, he once more resumed his march.

For three whole days Hoomayoon and his followers travelled without meeting with stream or fountain at which to slake their thirst; and their sufferings were, in consequence, such as can be more easily imagined than described. On the fourth day they came to a well, but so deep that the impatience of the followers could not be restrained till the bucket had reached the surface. They threw themselves rashly forward, and one pushing another, numbers lost their balance and perished. In like manner, several of the camels, drinking to excess on the following day at a rivulet which crossed their path, died upon the spot. At last, however, a miserable remnant reached Amurkote, on the confines of Sinde, the Raja of which received them with great hospitality; and here, on the 14th of October, 1542, was the celebrated Prince Akbar born. Finally, the King of Persia, hearing of Hoomayoon's misfortunes, and compassionating them, offered him a permanent

asylum within his dominions, and the fugitive was too much reduced, both in spirit and circumstances, to decline the proffered hospitality.

Hoomayoon had resided about a year at Ispahan, when a strong party in his favour having been formed, both in the seraglio and about the court, Shah Tamasph, the sovereign, supplied him with a corps of 10,000 horse, and sent him to recover, if he could, at least a portion of his paternal dominions. He marched first against his brothers, who had usurped the governments of Candahar and Cabul, and, after undergoing every diversity of fortune, succeeded, at the end of six years, in reducing those provinces to obedience. Of his brothers themselves, one who joined him early in the war, was slain while fighting by his side; and so highly were his services rated above his former treachery, that Hoomayoon caused the young Akbar to take his daughter to wife. The other, though repeatedly pardoned, persisted in acts of hostility, during the progress of which he fell at last into the hands of Hoomayoon. The Moguls were all of opinion that he should suffer death, in order to prevent further disturbances in the government; but Hoomayoon, unwilling to stain his hands with a brother's blood, was content to deprive him of sight. Some days after the sentence had been carried into execution, Hoomayoon went to see him. Kamran immediately rose, and walking some steps forward to meet him, said, "The glory of the king will not be diminished by visiting the unfortunate." Hoomayoon burst into tears, and wept bitterly. Kamran Mirza, (the name of this wrong-headed prince,) eventually obtained

permission to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, where, having resided three years, he died a natural death.

We have stated that Hoomayoon made an inroad into Lahore, when Selim, the son of Sheer, reigned at Delhi; and that the expedition was productive of no results favourable to the house of Timour. The truth is, that Hoomayoon's chiefs were then in a state of mutiny, which compelled him to return without risking a battle. Nor was it till he had been repeatedly invited back by the discontented subjects of Sekunder Shah, that he again ventured to embark in so gigantic an undertaking. Even then, however, it is doubtful whether he would have run the hazard, had not his reluctance been overcome by one of those remarkable influences which in all ages, and in all quarters of the globe, have, more or less, affected the fate of empires. "Being one day on a hunting party," says Ferishta, "he told some of his nobles that he was very uneasy in his mind regarding Hindostan. One of those who were in favour of the enterprise (a renewal of the invasion), observed, that there was an old method of divination, by sending a person forward, who should ask the names of the three individuals whom he first met, by which a conclusion, good or bad, might be drawn. The King, being naturally superstitious, humoured the fancy, and sent three horsemen in front, with directions to come back and communicate to him the answers they should receive. The first horseman who returned said that he had met a traveller named Dowlut, (Empire;) the second met a man who called himself Moorad, (good fortune;) and the

third was saluted by a villager, who bore the no less encouraging patronymic of Saadut, (the object of desire.") Thus cheered by fate, Hoomayoon assembled his forces, which amounted to no more than fifteen thousand horse; and being immediately joined by large numbers of the inhabitants of Punjaub, he carried every thing before him. Sekunder was defeated in a great battle under the walls of Surhinde, (in which Akbar earned for himself immortal honour,) and, fleeing to the mountains of Sewalic, left his vacant throne to be reoccupied by the son of Baber.

Hoomayoon did not long exercise the power which he had thus regained. He had been in possession of the capital but a few months, when, fatigued by walking too long upon the terrace of his library, he sat down at the top of the marble staircase, to enjoy the fresh air. He was roused by the Moezin, proclaiming the hour of devotion, to which he immediately paid attention; but attempting to rise, and endeavouring to support himself upon his staff, it slipped from beneath him, and he fell down headlong. He survived the accident only a few days, when, says his biographer, his soul took its flight to Paradise.

The successor of Hoomayoon was Akbar, one of the most illustrious of all the monarchs that ever filled an Indian throne. Though little more than twelve years of age at the date of his father's decease, no attempts were made to oppose his elevation; for he had been nursed in the school of difficulties and dangers, and his talents, naturally of a high order, came soon to maturity. He was fortu-

nate, too, in his guardian, one Beiram, by lineage a Toorkoman, who, though arbitrary, and perhaps domineering, was, in the strictest sense of the term, faithful to his master's interest. Partly through the respect in which the prime minister was held, partly because they saw that the boy Akbar was not to be held at naught, the friends of the father paid ready obedience to the edicts of the son; and it was well, under the peculiar circumstances in which the young emperor stood, that the case was so.

It has been stated that Sekunder, the rival of Hoomayoon, after sustaining a signal defeat, fled, almost alone, to the mountains of Sewalic. His place was soon occupied by Hemoo, the Vizier of the late Shah Mahomed Adily, an Hindoo by birth, and a man of low origin, but possessed of extravagant ambition and very considerable abilities. This person, assembling a force of 30,000 horse, advanced rapidly towards Agra, and, defeating a Mogul army which endeavoured to arrest his progress, made himself master of that city. He did not waste many days there, but pushing upon Delhi, and overthrowing a second army of Moguls, compelled Akbar, with his court and immediate followers, to retire across the Sutlooj. Had Hemoo followed up this last victory with the rapidity which marked his first movements, the probability is, that the house of Timour had been heard of no more; but, halting in Delhi to enjoy the shadow of royalty, he permitted the substance to escape from his grasp. The Moguls concentrated in Lahore, advanced again with increased numbers into Delhi,

and met their enemies at Paniput, where the Indians were totally defeated, and Hemoo himself made prisoner. He was immediately brought into the royal presence, upon which Beiram "recommended the King to do a meritorious act by killing the infidel with his own hand." Akbar, in order to fulfil the wish of his minister, drew his sword, and touched the head of the captive, a movement which entitled him to the appellation of Ghozy, (a slayer of infidels in war,) while Beiram, with a single blow of his scimitar, severed the head of the unfortunate Hemoo from his body.

Hitherto Beiram had been eminently useful to his master; but, like other subjects who conceive that they have laid their sovereign under obligations, he began now to presume upon his own merits. Akbar was not the man patiently to submit to this, no matter how conscious he might be of his minister's value; and he exhibited his displeasure in so marked a manner, that Beiram rushed into rebellion. It was a rash measure, and led only to the capture of Beiram, though it furnished a good opportunity for the display of that clemency which formed a prominent feature in Akbar's character. His followers being defeated, and himself reduced to the last extremity, Beiram sent a slave to report his unfortunate condition, and to implore pardon, which was not only promised, but a noble retinue dispatched to conduct him with every mark of distinction to the court. "On entering, Beiram hung his turban round his neck, and advancing rapidly, threw himself, in tears, at the foot of the throne; but Akbar instantly raised him with his own hand, and placed

him in his old station, at the head of the nobles. A splendid dress was now brought, and the King addressed him in the following terms. "If Beiram Khan love a military life, the government of Kalpy and Chundery offers a field for his ambition. If he choose rather to remain at court, our favour shall not be wanting to the benefactor of our family; but should he be disposed to seek devotion in retirement, let him perform a pilgrimage to Mecca, whither he shall be escorted in a manner suitable to his rank." Beiram replied, "The royal confidence being once shaken, how can I wish to remain in the presence? The clemency of the King is enough, and his forgiveness is more than a reward for my former services. Let me, therefore, avert my thoughts from this world to another, and be allowed to proceed to the Holy Shrine." As may be imagined, the King offered to this proposal no opposition, and Beiram, escorted by a magnificent retinue, set out for Mecca; but, ere he reached the holy city, he fell by the hand of an individual whose father he had slain in battle some years before.

Akbar, thus freed from trammels, governed the empire with vigour and singular judgment. Though engaged in almost constant wars, he bestowed infinite pains upon the administration of the revenue, regulating by fixed laws the amount of taxes to be levied, and specifying distinctly the articles on which duties should be imposed. Our limits will not permit us to give even an outline of the many wise regulations of which he was the author; but the reader, who is curious on this head, will find

ample gratification by turning to the celebrated work of his historian, the Ayeen Akbary.

During the confusion attendant upon so many changes as had of late taken place at the seat of the supreme government, most of the provinces, not immediately occupied by the imperial troops, had rebelled. Against these Akbar lost no time in fitting out expeditions, and, beginning with Malwa, he soon reduced it to obedience. He had scarcely retired from this campaign, when Sheer Khan, the son of Sekunder Shah, was reported to be in movement from Bengal, at the head of a formidable army. Akbar sent two of his generals to meet him; by whom Sheer's troops were put to the route; but these chiefs, neglecting to transmit the due share of plunder to court, Akbar hastened in person to ascertain the cause. Overawed by the promptitude of the emperor, they made some flimsy excuse, which he, with his usual forbearance, was pleased to accept; for whilst it was a part of his policy to restrain rebellion by crushing it in the outset, he was ever ready to shut his eyes to faults, provided they were speedily and honestly atoned for.

We cannot pretend to describe at length the numerous wars in which Akbar was engaged, sometimes with his rebellious Soubahdars, sometimes with the Hindoo tribes, and sometimes with the Mahomedan sovereigns, his neighbours. We must content ourselves with stating, that Malwa was twice wrested from him and twice recovered; that Guzerat, after an obstinate defence, was subdued: that his own brother raised against him the standard of revolt in Cabul, was defeated and for-

given; that a Hindoo chief was appointed in his room; and that Bengal rebelling again and again, was again and again annexed to the empire. But Akbar's appetite for conquest, like that of other successful warriors, only "grew with that it fed on." He overran Cashmeer, a country which, till his time, had maintained its independence, and commanded his son, Moorad Mirza, on whom he had bestowed the government of Guzerat, to invade the Deccan. Everywhere his arms prospered. Khandeish was reduced, Berar given up by treaty, and Ahmednuggar, after a brave resistance, compelled to submit. This, however, was the last of Akbar's warlike exploits, for, returning to Agra, he died there, after a prosperous reign of fifty-one years and some months.

On the death of Akbar, Selim, his sole surviving son, prepared immediately to assume the government. He was not, however, permitted to do so without an effort on the part of a faction, to interrupt the line of the succession, by substituting prince Khoosrow in his room, and the plot was defeated, only through the fidelity of the commander of the city guard, who closed the gate against the conspirators, and delivered the keys into Selim's hand. Yet Selim, who appears not to have been naturally cruel, forgave the prince on his submission; he even spared the life of his son, in spite of a second rebellion, during the progress of which several skirmishes were fought, and many excesses committed; but he condemned him to perpetual imprisonment, after he had witnessed the execution of the chief men among his adherents. Selim now felt himself to be securely seated on the throne; he took the

title of Mahomed Jehangire, or conqueror of the world, and dated his reign from October 21, 1605, being then in the thirty-seventh year of his age.

The most remarkable event connected with the personal history of Jehanghire, and that which more than any other gave a character to his government, was his marriage with the wife of one of the Omrahs, whose assassination, like that of Uriah, opened the way for the gratification of the monarch's passion. This female, whose romantic story is given at great length by Dow, was the daughter of Chaja Aiass, a Tartar of noble birth, but decayed fortunes. She was born in the Desert which divides Tartary from Hindostan, at a moment when her parents were endeavouring to make their way into the latter region, and she was left to perish where she first saw the light, because they were both so spent by travel and fasting as to be incapable of carrying her farther. When they had advanced about a mile from the place, however, and the eyes of the mother could no longer distinguish the solitary tree under which the infant lay, she gave way to grief, and casting herself upon the ground, exclaimed bitterly, 'my child, my child!' She endeavoured to raise herself, but she had no strength to return. Aiass was pierced to the heart, he promised to bring the infant, and ran back for the purpose; but his horror knew no bounds when he beheld a huge black snake twisted round the body of the child. He rushed forward, and the serpent, alarmed by his shouts, slid into a hollow in the tree. He took up his daughter unhurt, conveyed her to her mother, and was in the act of explaining the wonderful escape to which he had been a witness,

when a caravan of travellers overtook them, and relieved their wants. The happy family pursued their journey, grateful to providence for its bounty, and reached Lahore without the occurrence of any other mal-adventure.

Aiass, who was possessed both of talent and prudence, soon obtained employment in the household of one of the nobles; he was introduced by him to Akbar, and rose to be treasurer of the empire. He had bestowed infinite pains upon the education of his daughter, whose beauty, not less than her accomplishments, won the affections of the Prince Selim; but the girl being betrothed to Shere Afken, a Toorkoman Omrah, Akbar would not listen to his son's proposed violation of that contract. Asher-ul-Nissa was accordingly married to Shere Afken; but that which he did not venture to attempt during the life of his father, Selim was not slow to accomplish so soon as he himself came into possession of the government. The brave Shere, after escaping more than one snare, fell at last by the hands of assassins; and his beautiful and ambitious wife was transferred to the imperial harem.

It is not very easy to assign the motive which for four entire years hindered Jehangire from possessing himself of the prize thus infamously won; yet, throughout that extended space, he not only never visited the widow of Shere, but refused to grant an adequate allowance for her maintenance. She was even reduced to the necessity of supporting herself and her attendants by the sale of embroidery, which was eagerly purchased both on account of its intrinsic elegance, and because it was

the produce of a Sultana's labour. But a single visit sufficed to renew the flame, which had so unaccountably been permitted to languish: Noor Mahl (for such was the name which she had assumed) became at once the favourite; and from that moment her influence never declined. Through her Aiass, with his two sons, were advanced to the highest dignities, and invested with unlimited power in the administration of affairs; nor while the former lived, had the people of Hindostan the slightest reason to complain that their happiness had been sacrificed to a woman's caprice. On the contrary, the modesty, not less than the virtues of Aiass, reconciled all classes to his elevation; and his viziriat was long remembered in India as a period of strict justice and rare prosperity.

With the exception of Koosroow's rebellion, no warlike movements were made during the six first years of Jehangire's reign; but at the end of that period the Afgans broke from the mountains into Cabul, whilst insurrections took place at the same moment both in Bengal and Bahar. The Afgans were almost immediately repulsed; and the springs of government being strong, the commotions in Bengal and Bahar were suppressed; yet it seemed as if a continuance of profound peace were perfectly incompatible with the general condition of Hindostan. The Rajah of Oudipoor, a district situated between Ajmere and Malwa, actuated by what motives it does not appear, suddenly refused to pay the tribute which had hitherto been exacted from him. He not only dismissed with ignominy the messengers sent to remonstrate with him, but invaded the province of Kandeish, where, taking

the imperial troops by surprise, he obtained some successes. But though he continued so far to improve upon these, that Purviz, the emperor's second son, failed in driving him back, he was in the end compelled to come to terms, chiefly through the management of Churrum, the brother of Purviz, a prince to the full as politic as he was brave.

War once kindled, the flame continued from time to time to burst out at different points both within and without the compass of the empire. Jehangire, for example, led an army against the Hindoo tribes which dwelt in poverty and independence among the mountains of Sewalic; and after a prodigious loss of men, as well as the endurance of endless hardships, reduced twenty-two petty chieftains to the rank of tributaries. Almost at the same time the princes of the Deccan entered into a combination against him, which was not broken up without great exertion; and the alarm occasioned by their proceedings had hardly subsided, when Churrum, or as he was otherwise called, Shah Jehan, broke out into rebellion. That ambitious prince, after assassinating his brother Khoosrow, whom he had persuaded Jehangire to give up to his care, turned his arms, victorious over the Deccan chiefs, against his father, whom he pronounced unworthy to hold any longer the reins of government, in consequence of his servile submission to the will of the favourite Sultana. The troops of the emperor and his rebellious son came to an action on the banks of the Nerbudda; the latter were defeated, and Shah Jehan, narrowly escaping from the battle, led, for some years afterwards, the life of a vagabond.

It is worthy of remark, that previous to the oc-

currence of these disturbances, Aiass, the wise and upright Vizier, had paid the debt of nature; and that the Sultana, freed from the restraint which a parent alone appeared capable of imposing upon her, had begun to exercise a calamitous influence throughout the empire. Among other mischievous uses to which her power was directed, may be enumerated the attempt, in which she proved too successful, to sow enmity between the emperor and the most illustrious of his generals. It was to the valour and conduct of Mohabet Khan that Jehangire had been mainly indebted for the victory over Shah Jehan; and the emperor, naturally just, was well disposed to acknowledge the debt, by marks of the highest distinction. But Noor Mahl, jealous of every rival, stirred up suspicions in the royal mind, by insinuating, that the slave who had power to keep the crown on his master's head, had power to take it off. From that moment Jehangire's manner towards Mohabet underwent a change; offensive mandates were addressed to him; a strong fort, of which he was governor, was transferred to a creature of the Sultana, and he was peremptorily ordered to make his appearance at court. There was no mistaking the object of the last command, yet Mohabet, strong in the consciousness of innocence, and supported by five thousand Rajpoot friends, determined at all hazards to obey it.

As he approached the royal camp, (for Jehangire was at that time enjoying the pleasures of the chase on the banks of the river Behut, in Lahore,) Mohabet sent forward one of his near kinsmen to represent to the emperor the uniform loyalty

of his own conduct, and to expose the craft of his enemies. The messenger was seized in the royal square, stripped of his clothes, bastinadoed, covered with rags, placed backwards on a horse of the meanest description, and chased from the encampment amid the shouts and insults of the rabble. Mohabet instantly formed his resolution. Dividing his followers into two bands, he placed himself in ambuscade at the head of one of them, not far from the point where the royal retinue must cross; and having waited till the greater portion had passed the stream, he dashed at the bridge and destroyed it. To gallop into the heart of the guards and seize the person of the emperor was the work of a moment, and though the troops from the opposite side made several efforts to come to their master's assistance, they were on each occasion repulsed with loss. Yet this generous Omrah took no mean advantage of the influence which fortune had awarded to him. He not only refused to lay the emperor under the smallest restraint, but at his bare entreaty spared the life of Noor Mahl, though he had run the risk of a traitor's death in order to deliver his country from her capricious tyranny. His reward was such as might have been anticipated. That artful woman no sooner regained her power, than she exerted it to effect the destruction of her noble-minded enemy, who became a wanderer from place to place, proscribed and outlawed, having a price fixed by public proclamation upon his head. It is somewhat remarkable, in the history of those faithless times, that Mohabet should have thrown himself for protection upon the brother of his very persecutor, and that that brother should

have nobly sheltered him at a moment when all men besides had forsaken him. Such, however, was the case, and the friends equally convinced that there could be no peace for Hindostan whilst affairs were conducted after a fashion so unworthy, came to the resolution of dethroning Jehangire and setting up Shah Jehan in his room. Happily for all parties, Providence had decreed that their wishes should be more easy of accomplishment than they themselves anticipated. Ere any movement of importance was made, first, Purviz, the emperor's elder son, and then the emperor himself, died of natural diseases; and Shah Jehan, after a brief interval, was proclaimed sovereign in virtue of his birth-right. *

The reign of Shah Jehan began with the enactment of a tragedy, of no rare occurrence in Eastern countries; every male of the house of Timour, from whom opposition to his title might be apprehended, was by order of the new sovereign put to death. This was perhaps the only measure deserving of unmitigated reprehension, to which Shah Jehan lent himself; the remainder of his administration seems to have been distinguished by its mildness, not less than by its vigor and justice. He rewarded Aseph, the brother of Noor Mahl, by advancing him to the office of Vizier, and bestowed on the gallant Mohabet the chief command of his armies; and these chiefs served him in their respective stations, with unimpeachable fidelity. By the assistance of the former, tranquillity was esta-

* It was during the reign of Jehangire that Sir Thomas Roe came to the Mogul court as ambassador from England.

blished at home, the laws were duly administered, and commerce and agriculture promoted. By the valour of the latter the Uzbek Tartars were defeated, and the Rajah of Bundlecund, whom the confusion incident upon a change of rulers had tempted to rebel, was reduced to obedience. But a more formidable enemy soon appeared in the person of Lodi, the general in chief under Jehangire, of the troops in the Deccan. This man, between whom and Shah Jehan an inveterate jealousy had ever existed, was among the number who opposed the elevation of the new emperor, and though motives of policy led to his continuance in office, he was never cordially forgiven. On the contrary, he seems to have been marked out for destruction from the hour when Shah Jehan ascended the musnud, and the favourable moment appearing now to have arrived, he was commanded to show himself at court.

Lodi, a lineal descendant from the ancient emperors of India, could ill-brook the indignities, which on his paying obedience to the royal mandate, were heaped upon him. Proud, brave, and possessed of no ordinary genius in military affairs, he determined upon rebellion; and he was restrained from carrying the resolution into immediate effect, solely by apprehensions for the safety of his family. For he came not to Agra alone; his wives and children, including three sons grown to man's estate, were as well as himself in the toils, and though he and the young men might escape, the women must of necessity be left at the disposal of the emperor. Lodi was freed from his dilemma by an act of singular self-devotion on the part of his

wives. Without communicating to any one the design which they had formed, these faithful creatures shut themselves up in a chamber, and with their own hands delivered him from the last restraint which was imposed upon his honour. Lodi wept bitterly over their bodies; then having committed them all to one grave, he threw himself upon his horse, and followed by his sons and attendants, gallopped furiously from the eity.

Lodi directed his course towards Golconda; but his progress was arrested within forty miles of Agra, by the swollen and rapid state of the river Chumbil. While he lingered upon the bank waiting till the torrent should subside, his pursuers, in great force, made their appearance, and time enough was afforded only to seize a narrow pass, where a superiority of numbers offered few advantages. A sanguinary affair ensued, in which after performing prodigies of valour, Lodi with his followers were worsted, and he himself, with a scanty remnant with difficulty escaped. But their retreat being bravely covered by one of Lodi's sons, the fugitives managed to gain the opposite bank just as the Imperialists plunged into the ford; and a sense of imminent danger left no time to lament over the fall of the chivalrous youth, by whose death a parent's life had been preserved.

When the escape of Lodi was communicated to the emperor, he gave directions that a numerous army should assemble, and putting himself at its head, marched towards the Deccan. There was ample ground of alarm on his part. Lodi, beloved by those whom he honoured with his more intimate acquaintance, and respected by all for his

courage and conduct, soon gathered round him a considerable band of adherents; and persuading the sovereigns of Bejapour, Hydrabad, Telingana and Golconda, that their cause was common, he induced them to make preparations for war. But the movements of the emperor were too rapid, and the army which he commanded too numerous, to permit these preparations to be completed. When the storm burst, Lodi was poorly supported by his allies; yet he maintained himself with determined resolution among the mountains, and gained so many advantages that at one period the affairs of Shah Jehan, presented a very unpromising appearance. But the emperor no sooner appointed his vizier Aseph to head the troops, than the fears of the confederates overcame their reason; they withdrew from Lodi much of the scanty means which they had previously afforded; and the gallant outlaw, attacked by overwhelming numbers, suffered a total defeat, from the effects of which neither he nor his original abettors ever wholly recovered.

The fate of Lodi himself was one of the most tragical that ever befel even an Oriental adventurer. Having ascertained that his late protector, the King of Golconda, was about to purchase peace by betraying him into the hands of his enemy, he resolved to abandon the country ere the avenues of escape should be blocked up; and he carried the resolution into practice at the head of 400 horse, in spite of all the vigilance of Shah Jehan's generals. He fled into Malwa, whither an army of ten thousand men pursued him. For a while Lodi contrived to baffle and elude their search, till he was treacherously attacked by one

of the Rajas, and in the action which ensued many of his best men perished. Among them was another of his sons, who fell wounded at the first charge, and " the unfortunate Lodi resigned his soul to grief." He fled, but it was to accumulated misery. He fell in, the very next day, with the army of Abdalla: there scarce was time for flight. His eldest son, Mahommed Aziz, stopt with a few friends, in a narrow part of the road; and devoting their lives for the safety of Lodi, were cut off to a man. He waited half the night on a neighbouring hill, with a vain expectation of the return of his gallant son. All was silent; and the unhappy father was dissolved in tears. The noise of arms approached at last; but it was the enemy, recent from the slaughter of his son and his friends. He fled towards Callenger; but Said Amud, the governor of that place, marched out against him. A skirmish ensued: Lodi was defeated; Hussein, the only son left to him, was slain, and his adherents were now reduced to thirty horsemen. He was pursued with such vehemence, that he had not even time for despair.

" Abdalla, (says Col. Dow,) on hearing of the low ebb of Lodi's fortune, divided his army into small parties, to scour the country. A detachment under Muziffer Khan, fell in with the unfortunate fugitive. When he saw the enemy at a small distance, he called together his thirty followers: 'Misfortune,' said he, 'has devoted me to ruin: it is in vain to struggle longer against the stream; I have lost my sons, but your attachment, in the last extremity, tells me I have not lost all my friends. I only remain of my family, but let me

not involve you in the destruction which overwhelms me without resource. Your adherence is a proof that I have conferred favours upon you; permit me to ask one favour in my turn. It is—that you leave me—and save yourselves by flight.' They all burst into tears, and told him that was the only command from him which they could not obey. He was silent, and gave the signal with his sword to advance. Muziffer was astonished when he saw thirty men marching up against his numerous detachment. He imagined they were coming to surrender themselves. But when they had come near his line, they put their horses on a gallop, and Muziffer ordered his men to fire. A ball pierced Lodi through the left breast; he fell dead at the feet of his horse, and his thirty faithful companions were cut off to a man."*

The joy of Shah Jehan when informed of the death of Lodi was extravagant in proportion to the degree of respect in which he had held him; his future proceedings proved that he had regarded this one man as far more formidable than all his other enemies combined. He now carried on operations in the Deccan, with ruthless severity, and unbounded confidence. Town after town was taken, and province after province overrun, till the confederate princes were glad to purchase peace on the most humiliating terms. The emperor listened to the proposition with the greater readiness, that a grievous famine at this time oppressed the whole of India, which rendered it extremely difficult for him to support an army so far

* Dow's History of Shah Jehan.

from home. But the peace was maintained, on his part, only so long as suited his own convenience. The famine had scarcely subsided, when he again marched across the Nerbudda, and his successes on this occasion were even more brilliant than before. The whole of the Mahomedan provinces, south of that river, were reduced — their rulers became hereditary viceroys under the crown of Delhi—and an army was left in Kandeish, under the orders of a Soubahdar, to overawe and hold them in permanent subjection.

In the prosecution of these and of the other wars in which he was engaged, Shah Jehan was mainly indebted for success to his general, Mohabet, to that leader's son, Khan Zeman, and after their death to the military talents of his own sons. These were four — Dara, Suja, Arungzebe, and Morad — all of whom, contrary to the general usages of the East, were educated in camps and cabinets, not in the seclusion of the harem. The consequence was, that, though not gifted by nature with the same degree of talent, they were all equally ardent, brave, and aspiring; and as each esteemed himself worthy of empire, they maintained the semblance of unanimity only so long as an opportunity of acting otherwise was wanting. It came at last in the illness of Shah Jehan, whose health suddenly gave way to his excesses; the complaint under which he laboured was believed to be mortal, and the princes lost no time in acting upon plans which they had long and carefully matured.

At the period of the emperor's indisposition, Dara, the eldest of the four brothers, was, where

the partiality of his father generally kept him, in Agra; Suja, the next in point of seniority, governed Bengal; Arungzebe commanded in the Deccan; and Morad, the youngest of all, filled the office of Soubahdar in Guzerat. Dara, gallant, open, and sincere, but impetuous, thoughtless, and rash, instantly assumed the authority to which he believed himself entitled; and made no secret of his hostile intentions towards his kinsmen. He commanded all communication between their provinces and the city to be suspended—their agents, papers, and effects, at the capital, were seized; such of the high officers of state as were suspected of attachment to their persons were removed from their situations, and orders were issued to place the imperial forces everywhere in a state of preparation for the field. Nor were the younger princes in their turn less active in preparing for the collision which they well knew awaited them. Suja, who shared largely in the rashness which distinguished Dara, was the first to take the field. He had collected a numerous army, and was possessed of great wealth, obtained not at all times by the most justifiable means; and he hoped by rapidity of movement to establish himself on the throne ere either of his brothers should be in a condition to oppose him. But his own impetuosity led to a result very different from what he designed to secure; he was surprised in his camp by Suliman, Dara's son, defeated, and driven back across the Ganges. Nevertheless, Dara was far from being freed from his difficulties by this victory. He had another and a much more formidable rival in Arungzebe, a prince who, to all the

bravery of the bravest of his brothers, united a degree of caution and sagacity of which they were totally destitute.

The character of Arungzebe has been ably drawn by M. Bernier, the witness and historian of this memorable revolution. Deep, designing, and subtle, he passed among the mass of observers as a man absolutely free from ambition; and he persuaded Morad, who appears to have possessed less penetration than either Dara or Suja, that it was for him, not for himself, that he took up arms. The simple prince, falling readily into the snare, hastened to add his forces to those of Arungzebe; and the combined armies advanced, without interruption, as far as the Nerbudda. Here they found Dara prepared with a force greatly superior in point of numbers to dispute the passage of the river; but that which open violence could hardly have accomplished, the superior generalship of Arungzebe effected. Having procured guides on whom he could depend, Arungzebe left his tents standing, and marched thirty miles up the stream, by bye-roads, and mountain passes. He turned by this means the flank of Dara's position, passed the river at a ford where no guard had been planted, and endeavoured by great exertion to throw himself between his brother and the capital. But Dara no sooner discerned how affairs stood, than he made haste to remedy the evil which his want of caution had produced. He put his columns instantly in motion, and, outstripping Arungzebe, compelled him to cast all upon the hazard of a battle.

In the action which ensued both Dara and

Arungzebe exhibited proofs of daring courage and very considerable skill. For a long while victory hung evenly balanced between them; but in the end the superior numbers of Dara, rendered doubly effective by his example, began to turn the scale. It was at this critical juncture, that the prince was persuaded by a treacherous Omra to descend from his elephant. The effect was ruinous; for his troops, missing the royal umbrella, became persuaded that their chief had fallen—and, regardless of the exertions of the inferior officers, abandoned the field. Dara was hurried off among the torrent of fugitives, and at the very moment when he had given up all for lost, Arungzebe found himself a conqueror and in possession of the capital.

Having secured this great end, and made himself master of the person of Shah Jehan, Arungzebe began to lay aside the mask which he had hitherto worn. Pretending that Morad had been detected in a plot against his life, he caused that brave but unfortunate prince to be cast into prison. His next step was to obtain from his father a formal resignation of the throne; his third, to yield to the entreaties of his own parasites by ascending it. But he was not yet free from danger. Suja, rallying in Bengal, threatened him from one side—Dara, who had retired into Lahore, appeared in arms on another—whilst Suliman, the son of Dara, though deserted by his troops, was understood to be actively engaged in sowing dissension through the provinces. The activity of Arungzebe, ably seconded by the exertions of his officers, finally overcame all opposition. Suja was overthrown in a great battle,

from the effects of which he recovered only to sustain a second and still more decisive defeat; and though he escaped for a while by taking refuge among the mountains of Tipperah, he was in the end put to death by order of the Rajah of Arracan. In like manner Dara, after fleeing from place to place, sought shelter with a petty prince of Sinde, who treacherously seized and sent him in chains to Delhi, where, without so much as the pretence of a formal trial, he was murdered. Nor was it by the death of his brothers only that this successful usurper sought to secure to himself the peaceable possession of the throne. One of his own sons, who had married the daughter of Suja, and been induced by affection for his wife to espouse her father's interests, was cast into prison, from whence, like most other royal captives, he was never permitted to emerge. But, though he waded to the musnud through oceans of blood, the conduct of Arungzebe, as emperor of Hindostan, deserves the highest commendation. Not less considerate than energetic, whilst he repressed all attempts at insubordination, he caused the laws to be administered with so much strictness, that ground for revolt rarely occurred; indeed his lenity in exacting even the established dues from the cultivators, might serve as a model to other and more civilized governments. Wherever a province was represented to have suffered from drought, inundations, or other natural calamities, Arungzebe issued strict orders that no collections should be made; and in cases of famine he relieved the sufferings in one part of his dominions by purchasing up and carrying thither, at his own

cost, the surplus produce of another. Low, therefore, as we are bound to estimate his character as a man, it is impossible to speak slightingly of Arungzebe as a prince:—a greater and a better sovereign never sat upon the throne of Hindostan.

Arungzebe filled the throne of India little short of half a century, during which time occurred a variety of events all of them worthy of particular mention by the historian. Among these may be enumerated the invasion of Assam by Emir Jumla, the governor of Bengal; a mutinous movement of certain Fakirs, or religious mendicants, which was not suppressed without considerable difficulty; a difference with the court of Persia, which had well nigh led to a disastrous war; and, above all, the consolidation, under Sivajee, of the empire of the Mahrattas. Of this last event, not more on account of its superior interest at the moment, than because of the influence which it has exerted upon the fortunes of the British empire in India, it will be necessary to give a somewhat detailed account.

CHAPTER VII.

Rise of the Mahratta Power—History of Sivajee—His Death—Succeeded by Sambah—Operations of Arungzebe against the Rajpoots—His successes in Deccan—Sambah surprised—Death of Arungzebe.

It has been stated already that a tract of country embracing portions of Khandesh, Berar, Beder, Arungabad and Bijapoor, constituted the original possessions of a people who long and gallantly held out against the encroachments of the emperors of Delhi. The people in question were the Mahrattas, a race who boasted of great antiquity, who professed the religion of Brahma, made use of the Sanscrit character, and recognised the ordinary distinctions of cast; but who, unlike other Hindoos, permitted and expected every male among them to follow, as often as occasion should require, the occupation of a soldier. It is a matter of some regret that the early history of the Mahrattas presents no prominent features of which it is possible to make use. All that can be stated with certainty is, that they were, at every stage of their existence, warlike and enterprising—that even in the plains they struggled hard for independence—and that among the hilly regions, which extend from Guzerat to Canara, they never wholly lost it.

The obstinacy, however, of such tribes as found it impracticable to retire to the mountains, sank, as might be expected, under repeated invasions. The chiefs gradually submitted, and the nation, if such it may be termed, became, in the end, obedient to the same necessity which gave foreign masters to other Hindoo states.

In this condition the Mahrattas subsisted, as well under the last of the Patan emperors as under the descendants of Mahommed Shah Bhamenee, the first sultan of the Deccan. During the confusion which accompanied the dissolution of the latter empire, they seem indeed to have aspired at independence; but their efforts being loose, and for the most part feebly directed, no results of importance arose out of them. The people, therefore, still continued in subjection to the different Mahomedan princes whose dominions chanced to embrace portions of their country, whilst the chieftains were numbered among the local nobility, and retained their lands and fortresses on the payment of a stipulated revenue.

We have seen that the Moguls no sooner established themselves upon the throne of Hindostan, than they began to cast eager glances towards the country south of the Nerbudda. Akbar was the first whom the state of his affairs at home permitted to march an army across that river; but his conquests were not extensive, nor was their influence felt very widely. What he had begun, however, his son and grandson laboured, with equal industry, to complete. Jehangire first, and after him Shah Jehan, carried on numerous wars in the Deccan, till a considerable portion of it was actually re-

duced, and the strength of the remainder materially impaired.

Over the conquered province (which embraced parts of the countries dependent upon Arungabad, Ahmednuggur, and Beder) Arungzebe was, during the latter years of the reign of Shah Jehan, appointed governor. Even at that time his capacious mind entertained the idea of annexing all the unconquered countries of the peninsula to the empire; and it is probable that he would have prosecuted the enterprise in person, had not his father's illness called away his attention to other matters. But the preparations of his brothers, not less than his own ambition, compelling him to fight for a nobler prize, he marched, as has been described already, towards Agra; and as he carried with him the flower of the troops, with the most experienced leaders, he left Deccan but indifferently guarded against hostile movements.

For some time previously to the departure of Arungzebe from the Deccan, an adventurer had appeared upon the stage, who was destined, by his individual courage and activity, to effect a mighty change in the political condition of his country. We allude to Sivajee, or Siwaji, the founder of the Mahratta empire, whose personal adventures would appear too romantic for belief, were not the leading facts attested by evidence such as it is impossible to contradict. A short account of the lineage of this remarkable person, as well as of the most prominent of his exploits, is all that our narrow limits will permit us to offer.

There dwelt in the country subject to the Sultan

of Ahmednuggur several Mahratta families of distinction, the most illustrious of which bore the patronimic of Jadow, and derived their descent from the Rajas of Doorgurh. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, Lookjee Jadow Rao, the representative of his house, held a jaghire under the Nizam, with the dignity of a commander of ten thousand horse, for whose maintenance his jaghire was assigned. In the same district dwelt another Mahratta family, surnamed Bhonslay, of meaner rank than the former, but still highly respectable. They held several Potailships, which had descended to them from remote antiquity, though their chief residence was at Verole, near Dowlatabad, and they were connected by the tie of patron and client with the house of Jadow. It chanced that one of these, by name Mallojee Bhonslay, obtained, through Lookhjee Jadow Rao's interest, a trifling command in the Nizam's service, in which he acquitted himself so well that he gradually rose to distinction. His patron was naturally pleased, and continued to treat him with marked kindness, which led, in the end, to an alliance between the two families, brought about, as far as one party was concerned, under circumstances of great indelicacy.

Mallojee Bhonslay, after continuing long childless, was at last made happy by the birth of twin sons, the elder of whom he called Shajee, the younger Shureefjee. The former was a remarkably fine boy, and, when five years of age, accompanied his father to the residence of Jadow Rao; where, according to custom, he played at the reli-

gious sport of Hoolie* with the daughter of his host. Her name was Jeejee; she was an exceedingly interesting child, and her father, in the joy of his heart, exclaim'd, "Well, girl, wilt thou take this boy for thy husband?" and then, turning to the company, observed in the same strain, "they are a beautiful pair." Upon this speech, delivered without premeditation or design, Mallojee Bhonslay chose to erect a claim of intermarriage, which Jadow Rao, though with extreme reluctance, was compelled to admit. To do him justice, however, Mallojee brought not the daughter of his early protector into poverty. Having amassed considerable treasures, by means not always the most justifiable, he procured his own advancement to the rank of a commander of five thousand, ere he pressed Jadow Rao upon the subject; and as the forts of Sewnee and Chakun, with their dependent districts, were his, as well as the Pergunnahs of Poona and Sopa in jaghire, the descendant of a race of kings could no longer hold out. The marriage of Shajee with Jeejee was celebrated with great pomp, A.D. 1604, and was honoured by the presence of the sovereign.

Not long after this, the Moguls began that series of aggressions in the Deccan which led to the total overthrow of three out of the five kingdoms, of which mention has already been made. Ahmednuggur, after a desperate struggle, was subdued,

* This festival is described by Colonel Broughton in his letters from a Mahratta camp. It is celebrated, like the Saturnalia among the Romans, with great freedom of speech and gesture—though the chief sport consists in squirting coloured water upon all who come within reach.

chiefly through the treachery of certain of its own chiefs, among whom Jadow Rao was conspicuous. But Shajee, who had succeeded to his father's jaghires, continued true to his native prince till all hope of further resistance disappeared; and then gave in his submission only that he might obtain a breathing space for the maturing of certain ambitious projects of his own. He withdrew, eventually, into Bejapoor, by the sultan of which, Mohammed Adil Shah, he was well received; and in that service he gained both renown as a soldier, and rank and property as a citizen. Among all who withstood the might of the Mogul forces, he was by far the most enterprising and courageous; indeed he managed matters with so much address, as at one period to recover possession of no inconsiderable portion of their conquests. But his new master, too feeble or too injudicious to support him as he ought, at length made peace, and Shajee was again compelled to sue for pardon.

It seems to have been the wish of Shajee to accept employment under the Emperor, to whom, indeed, he made a tender of his arm; but his proposal was declined, though he was given to understand that he might continue to serve the Sultan of Bejapoor. He gladly availed himself of the permission, and the jaghires of Poona and Sopa having been ceded to that prince, Shajee was once more invested with them. But he expressed no wish to settle there, for the coolness which all along subsisted between him and his wife's relations had latterly extended to themselves. Jeejee had refused to follow him when he first abandoned the cause of the Emperor, and as he married a second

wife soon after, they never met again. He according entered with great readiness upon an expedition to Carnatic, where he again distinguished himself by his courage and conduct, and where his gallantry and good fortune gained him large estates.*

In the meanwhile Jeejee was resident at Poonah, under the protection of Dadajee Konedeo, the agent and confidential friend of her husband. She had borne two sons, the elder of whom, Sumbhajee, was with his father, while the younger, Sivajee, the future founder of the Mahratta dynasty, remained with her. The utmost care appears to have been taken both of the child and of his mother, by Dadajee. He built a large house in the city for their accommodation; he procured the most able instructors for the child, and diligently attended to their comforts, whilst at the same time he preserved order and good feeling in the districts by his just and merciful conduct towards the people. It is not, indeed, going too far to assert, that to his judicious proceedings in the latter respect not a little of his ward's influence in after life may be attributed; for the mountaineers of Poonah, like mountaineers in general, seem to have been peculiarly sensible of kindness.

Be this, however, as it may, we are assured on all hands that Sivajee, as he approached towards manhood, became a prodigious favourite among all ranks of his countrymen. Though ignorant of the arts of reading or writing, which, like Mah-

* He subdued the Rajah of Tanjore, whose principality he usurped, and it continued in the family of Ekojee (his son by the second wife) till conquered by the English.

rattas in general, he probably held in great contempt, Sivajee was master, at seventeen years of age, of all such accomplishments as were supposed to befit his station: he was a good archer, an expert marksman, skilful in the use of the sword, spear, and arrow, and managed a horse with unrivalled elegance and address. He was, moreover, fully instructed in the rules and observances of his caste, well acquainted with history, or the legends which supplied its place, and profoundly versed in poetry, both heroic and lyric, whilst his veneration for the religious customs of his forefathers was, or appeared to be, boundless. But the feeling which seems to have been implanted with the greatest care in his bosom, was an inveterate abhorrence of Mohamedanism and of its professors. This alone, had there been a total absence of other motives, would have probably impelled him to devote his best energies to the extirpation of the hated race; but when, in addition to his religious zeal, there was ambition and patriotism to be gratified, it is not to be wondered at if he early took a line which he never afterwards abandoned.

The first movements of this extraordinary man were directed solely to the attainment of advantages to himself. He gathered round him a band of daring youths, whom he employed in levying contributions and driving off plunder from the low countries; and he conducted these forays with so much talent and address, that though universally suspected, no definite charge could, for a time, be brought against him. His followers were Mawulees, the natives of the glens and little vales

which intersect the Ghaut chain in great numbers, whom he found, though in appearance clownish and stupid, to be active, intelligent, and remarkably faithful. These he attached warmly to himself, by a frank and manly deportment, and by judicious liberality; nor did any great while elapse ere he openly led them against several of the strong holds by which their country was bridled. The forts fell, one after another, into his hands, the commanders of several were gained over, and the number of his adherents increased so fast, as to draw towards him the attention of the Bejapoor government. But neither the threats of the Sultan, nor the remonstrances of Dadajee Konedeo, had the smallest weight with him; the former he met with evasive professions, the latter with promises of amendment; but he persisted in his career with an energy and decision which gave ample promise of great results.

The most important acquisition which Sivajee made in this stage of his career, was the castle of Torna, a hill fort exceedingly difficult of access, and situated about twenty miles south-west of Poonah, at the source of the Neira river. It was the strong hold of a chieftain, who seems to have paid into the treasury of Bejapoor just as much (and no more) of revenue as suited his own convenience; and Sivajee, glad of the opportunity which that circumstance afforded, lost no time in despatching agents to the Sultan's court. He represented that he had acted only from a due attention to the interests of the state; that it was his intention to pay a much greater rent than had ever yet been paid by any Deshmook or collector, and entreated

that a confirmation of his rights might be forwarded, so as to enable him to discharge his revenue whilst he supported his own authority. But he by no means delayed his ulterior proceedings till an answer to this application should be returned. On the contrary, he employed a large body both of soldiers and countrymen in the reparation and enlargement of the walls; and he was so fortunate as to discover, in the course of the excavations which he caused to be made, a considerable treasure concealed under ground. This he of course appropriated to his own use; and he applied it to the purpose of erecting a new fort on the mountain of Mhorbudh, about three miles south-east of Torna. It needed but some such proceeding as this to excite to the highest pitch the jealousy of the Bejapoor government. Shajee himself was now applied to, in a tone of mingled accusation and complaint; and Shajee, who as yet at least was not privy to his son's designs, wrote strongly against them. Nevertheless, the young man went forward in the course which he had chalked out for himself, and an event occurred before long which added greatly to the force of the principles which had heretofore directed him.

His faithful guardian, Dadajee Konedeo, was seized with a dangerous distemper, and feeling that he could not recover, he sent for Sivajee. He spoke to him unreservedly concerning his present situation and future prospects—advised him by no means to attend to the cautious injunctions which he himself had formerly delivered—exhorted him to prosecute his plans of independence—to protect Brahmins, kine, and cultivators—to preserve the

temples of the Hindoos—and to follow the fortunes that were before him. Then after reminding him of the care which he had ever taken both of himself and his mother, he recommended his family to his young master's protection, and expired. The dying injunction of Dadajee served to confirm Sivajee in his designs. It gave to them a sanction in the eyes of the subordinate officers of the jaghire, and whilst it tended to raise his character, by justifying his proceedings, it doubtless elevated his motives in the estimation of all classes of the community.

There were three individuals particularly useful to him in every stage of his career—namely, Yessjee Kunk, Tannajee Maloosray, and Bajee Phasulkar—all of them Mawulees, or natives of the glens. These men were among the first to espouse his interests, and, till the fortune of war cut them off one by one, they never deserted him. They were largely instrumental in all the conquests which he achieved, particularly in the reduction of Sopa, which, on Dadajee's demise, refused to acknowledge his authority—whilst, by the influence which they possessed as revenue officers among their countrymen, they enabled him at all times, and under all circumstances, to recruit his bands. But neither their fidelity, nor his own resolution, sufficed to protect him from an attack made through a channel where he least of all expected danger. It was reported to him, when in the full tide of success, that his father, Shajee, had been enticed to Bejapoor, where he was kept in confinement, as a sort of hostage for his son's submission. For a moment Sivajee hesitated whether he ought not to

yield; but, being warned of the consequences by his wife, he adopted a bolder determination. He applied to the Emperor Shah Jehan in his father's favour, offering to acknowledge himself a vassal of the crown of Delhi, and to accept service under it; and he succeeded through the influence of that monarch in obtaining Shajee's release. This was all that he desired. He was no sooner assured that his father was at liberty, than he again declared himself independent, and again began a career of rapine and conquest, injurious both to the Mogul and the Sultan of Bejapoor.

Not long after these occurrences Arungzebe arrived in the Deccan, and commenced hostilities against Bejapoor. Sivajee, professing himself a servant of the Emperor, entered into correspondence with the prince, who readily sanctioned his retaining possession of his conquests, reserving a right in favour of Shah Jehan to dispose of them eventually as he might please. It proved to be a hollow accommodation; for Sivajee no sooner saw the Moguls fairly committed in a doubtful strife, than he surprised and plundered more than one town within the limits of their territories. Arungzebe, however, was soon in a condition to resent the affront, and Sivajee, not less prudent than daring, hastened to apologize for his misconduct, and to arrange their differences. It was high time that he should; for peace being concluded between the courts of Delhi and Bejapoor, the latter sent an overwhelming force to put an end to his rebellion.

The Mahratta met his enemy, on this occasion, with a degree of craft and hardihood morally, it

is true, most unjustifiable, but singularly characteristic. Having gained over a Brahmin attached to the suite of Azfool Khan, the leader of the Bejapoor army, he proposed to meet the latter, attended by a single follower, in order to make his submission. The offer was accepted, and the woods which hemmed in the only avenue leading to the place appointed, were lined by Mahratta soldiers, who were directed, on a given signal, to attack Azfool's escort, should such accompany him. The signal in question for engaging those nearest at hand, was the blast of a cotterie horn; for the attack of those more remote, the fire of five guns from the fort of Pertabgurh, whither Sivajee had retired for safety.

On the day appointed, Azfool Khan advanced along the treacherous avenue, accompanied by a corps of 1500 men, who halted a few hundred yards from the fort. He himself was dressed in a thin muslin garment, armed only with his sword, and, attended by a single trooper in full harness, as he approached the point of rendezvous. In the mean while Sivajee had made preparations for his purpose, not like a man meditating a deed of the grossest treachery, but like a patriot about to risk life and reputation in an enterprise of high daring and peril. Having performed his ablutions with more than common earnestness, he laid his head at his mother's feet, and besought her blessing. He then arose, put on a steel cap and chain armour under his turban and cotton gown, concealed a crooked dagger or *beechwa* in his right sleeve, and fixed on the fingers of his left hand a

wagnuck,* a weapon well known among the Mahrattas. Thus accoutred, he slowly descended from the fort. The Khan had arrived at the place of meeting before him, and was expressing his impatience at the delay, when Sivajee was seen advancing, apparently destitute of defensive armour, and attended by only one armed follower, his tried friend, Tannajee Maloosray. Sivajee no sooner came within view of Azfool Khan, than he repeatedly stopped, which the latter was easily induced to regard as a symptom of alarm. He accordingly desired his single armed attendant to fall back, whilst the Mahratta, without following the example thus set, steadily approached. They met, and embraced according to the usage of the country, when Sivajee instantly struck the wagnuck into the bowels of Azfool Khan. The latter recoiled, shouted murder, drew his sword, and smote the Mahratta on the head; but the steel cap effectually warded off the blow, and ere it could be repeated, the dagger completed what the tiger's claw began. All was now confusion and uproar. The Mahrattas, sallying from their ambuscade, cut the corps which attended the Khan to pieces—with the exception of such only as surrendered: for to these, in accordance with his usual practice, Sivajee gave orders that no violence should be offered. But among the number taken, the personal attend-

* The *beechwa* is a narrow crooked blade, named after the scorpion; the *wagnuck* is a small steel instrument, which fits on the fore and little finger. It takes its name from its resemblance to a tiger's claws, being composed of three curved blades, which are easily concealed in a half-closed hand.

art of the Khan was not included. That brave man refused the quarter which Sivajee and his friend, Tannajee Maloosray, offered; and died, after long sustaining against both a fierce and unequal contest.

Among the many daring exploits performed by Sivajee, there was not, perhaps, one which obtained for him a more lasting renown among his countrymen than this. They flocked in increased numbers to his standard, and enabled him not only to reduce the whole of Canara, but to extend his conquests far, and his predatory excursions still farther, in all directions. The fortress of Panalla surrendered, and a fresh army sent to cover it was defeated; while his plunderers carried devastation to the gates of Bejapoor itself, the suburbs of which they openly insulted. It was to no purpose that expedition after expedition was fitted out against him. Though frequently in imminent danger, and once at least saved from destruction only by the bravery of his rear-guard in the defence of a pass, he continued to baffle the utmost skill of his opponents; nor was the Sultan Ali Adil Shah himself, though for a time exceedingly prosperous, able wholly to reduce him. At last, after great changes of fortune on both sides, after Sivajee had taken, lost, and taken again many castles; conquered, been compelled to abandon, and again conquered various fertile districts, a truce was concluded, which left the Mahratta chief in independent possession of a strong country and an army of 40,000 foot and 7000 horse.

Up to the present moment Sivajee had been too much occupied with his operations in Beja-

poor, to direct any share of his hostility against the Moguls; but he no sooner found himself at liberty to act on a wider field, than he hastened to enter it. After hospitably entertaining his father, Shajee, who visited him on the conclusion of peace, the restless Mahratta put his troops in motion, and burst like a hurricane into the plains of Arungabad. Shasteh Khan, the maternal uncle of Arungzebe, was at that time Soubahdar of the Deccan; and being a man of ability he lost no time in collecting an army, with which he marched to avenge the insult. Success everywhere attended him. The Mahrattas were driven from post to post, their fields ravaged, and their castles taken; and Poonah itself, long the residence of Sivajee, was occupied. Here Shasteh Khan fixed his head quarters, as a convenient station from which to bridle the enemy; and here Sivajee once more made his name famous by an act of hardihood scarcely paralleled in history.

Though warned by his spies that the vigilance of the Soubahdar was great, Sivajee, who attributed his reverses mainly to the genius of that individual, determined at all hazards to surprise him. With this view he sent forward two Brahmins with instructions to corrupt, if possible, some of the Khan's guards, and so to secure the admission of a band of resolute men into Poonah. They gained over a few Mahratta* foot soldiers, who, the better to conceal what was intended, sought and obtained permission, on pretence of celebrating

* The Mahrattas were not, as yet, united under one head. Many of them still served in the armies of the Mohamedan sovereigns.

a marriage, to beat their drums, and create a bustle in the place. This was all that Sivajee desired. One evening in April, a little after sunset, he marched from Singurh, his favourite keep, at the head of a considerable body of infantry—whom, as he approached Poonah, he distributed in parties among the woods on each side of the road. He then selected five and twenty Mawulees, among whom were Yessjee Kunk, and Tannajee Maloosray—and, putting himself at their head, passed boldly on with the crowd. The remainder of the story we give in the words of Captain Grant, the able historian of this strange people.

"When all was quiet, Sivajee and his companions, familiar with every avenue and every accessible part of the Khan's residence, proceeded with a few pick-axes to the cook-room, above which there was a window slightly built up. Through this they made themselves a passage, but not without alarming some women of the Khan's family, who immediately ran and awoke their master. Shasteh Khan was hurrying out, and in the act of lowering himself from a window, when he received a blow on the hand, which cut off one of his fingers. He was fortunate in escaping without further injury, as his son, Abul Futeh Khan, and most of the guard at his house, were killed.

"Sivajee and his men retired before it was possible to intercept them, and gradually collected their parties on their rout to Singurh. When they got to the distance of three or four miles, they lighted torches, previously prepared, to occasion deception as to their numbers, and to express their defiance and derision. In this manner they as-

cended to the fort, in view of the Mogul camp, from which they might be distinctly seen."

The consequence of this bold attempt was, an immediate application on the part of the Khan to be recalled. He suspected all around him of treachery, and his energies, instead of rising to meet the supposed danger, gave way under it. Arungzebe complied with the request, and sent one of his sons, the Sultan Mahommed Maizim, to succeed him; but the administration of this prince was in every respect so feeble, that Sivajee again recovered his importance, and again ventured upon distant expeditions. He fitted out a fleet—took several ships belonging to the Moguls, filled with pilgrims, richly laden—surprised Surat, which would have been utterly destroyed but for the gallant defence offered by the Dutch and English factories, and extended his depredations to Bombay, and even to Carwar. But it would have been well for him had he refrained from the latter excursion. A strong northerly wind retarding his homeward voyage, he reached Raigurh only in time to learn that a new enemy was in the field. This was Mirza Raja-Sey-Sing, a Rajpoot prince of superior talents and energy, to whom the emperor had, during Sivajee's absence, intrusted the conduct of the Mahratta war.

Sivajee found it impossible to make head against this brave Hindoo, who pursued him from station to station, defeated him in several skirmishes, and at last sat down before Poorundhur, a strong hill fort into which the Mahratta chief had thrown his family and treasure. The garrison, faithful to

their trust, offered an obstinate defence, which Sivajee strove by every means to aid, but in the end both he and they began to perceive that surrender was inevitable. It was now that this bold warrior, yielding to the principle of honour recognised by his countrymen, determined to risk his own safety for the purpose of securing that of his wife. He proposed to give himself up into the hands of Mirza Raja on condition that the latter would undertake to effect a reconciliation between him and the Mogul; and as Mirza Raja readily gave his pledge to that effect, Sivajee actually entered the enemy's camp. But he knew the character of the man on whose generosity he threw himself. He was received with the utmost respect, and treated with marked delicacy and kindness.

When Mirza Raja entered upon his campaign against Sivajee, he was instructed to pass, as soon as the Mahratta should be reduced, towards Bejapoor; and to make himself master of that city, as well as of the provinces dependent upon it. He began his march accordingly, carrying his distinguished captive along with him, who behaved with so much courage and apparent good faith throughout, that the most favourable reports were made of him at Agra. He was directed, in consequence, to repair to the royal presence, and after making a circuit of the strong places still held by his own garrisons, for purposes best known to himself, he set out, attended by his son and a noble retinue, for the Mogul capital. The reception which awaited him there was not, however, such as he believed himself entitled to expect. He was placed

among the Omras of the second rank—an insult which affected him so deeply that he fainted away; and from that moment his design, if indeed such had ever been seriously entertained, of continuing in the Mogul service, was abandoned. Having requested and obtained permission that his attendants might retire in peace to their own country, he began to devise the means of following them himself; nor did any great while elapse ere he brought his plans to maturity.

The first step which Sivajee deemed it advisable to take will remind the reader of the conduct of David among the Philistines. He affected madness, and was placed in consequence under the especial charge of Ram Sing, the son of Mirza Raja. That chief, however, seems to have suspected that all was not as it appeared to be; for when Sivajee began to exhibit extraordinary liberality towards the poor, he requested that guards might be constantly stationed over him. Nevertheless Sivajee so won upon his keepers by kind words and generous presents, that they became contented to see him only once each morning and evening, after the last of which visits he retired to sleep, under the pretence of indisposition.

It was customary for Sivajee every Thursday evening to distribute among the poor, who came in crowds to receive the gift, great quantities of pastry and sweetmeats, which were brought to his residence in baskets so large that three or four men were required to transport each of them. When all things were ripe for his intended flight, Sivajee caused these baskets to be brought, as

usual, into his presence; and, after emptying them, placed his son in one, and lay down himself in another. A slave, in the meanwhile, occupied his master's bed, whilst the daring Mahratta, conveyed safely through the heart of the guards, lost no time in escaping beyond the city walls. A miserable horse was here provided, on which he placed his son, himself walking with the halter in his hand; and thus, without exciting the smallest suspicion, he reached Muttarah. Here he shaved his beard, mustachios, and long side locks; and committing his son to the care of a Brahmin, with the promise of ample rewards in the event of his conducting him to Deccan, he set out alone and on foot towards Benares. Our limits will not permit us to trace the journey of this singular man. Let it suffice to state, that, after running innumerable risks he arrived safely at his own country, where, being shortly after joined by the Brahmin and his charge, he lost no time in resuming the duties of his high station.

So early as the period of his unfortunate naval expedition, Sivajee's father died, and Sivajee himself, as if succeeding to an hereditary crown, caused coins to be struck in his own name. He now resolved to proceed one step farther, and as there chanced to be peace in the Deccan, which neither the Mogul nor the Sultans seemed disposed to interrupt, he caused himself to be enthroned with great pomp and solemnity. This done, he proceeded to arrange a perfect system of administration, both for the civil and military government of his country. His troops, as well infantry as cavalry, he placed under a body of officers, rising

one above another in regular order—from the Naik, or commander of ten, to the general of five thousand. Of his infantry, which had hitherto constituted, and till later times continued to constitute, the main prop of the Mahratta power, we are informed by Captain Grant, that they were raised either in the Ghaut Mahta, or the Concan; and that the recruits gathered from the former district were called Mawulees, those brought from the latter Hetkurees. "Those men brought their own arms, and were only furnished with ammunition by government. Their dress, though not uniform, was generally a pair of short drawers, coming half way down the thigh—a strong narrow band of considerable length, tightly girt about the loins—a turban—and sometimes a cotton frock. Most of them wore a cloth round their waist, which likewise answered the purpose of a shawl. Their common arms consisted of a sword, shield, and matchlock. Some of the Hetkurees, especially the infantry of Sawunt-Waree, used a species of firelock; the invention of the lock for the flint having been early received from the Portuguese. Every tenth man, instead of fire-arms, carried a bow and arrows, which were useful in night attacks and surprises, when the fire-arms were kept in reserve or prohibited. The Hetkurees excelled as marksmen; but they could seldom be brought to desperate attacks sword in hand, for which the Mawulees of Sivajee became celebrated. Both of them possessed an extraordinary facility of climbing, and could mount a precipice, or scale a rock with ease, where men of other countries must have run great risk of being dashed to pieces."

The cavalry, again, were of two kinds, called Bargeers, and Sillidars; the former of whom rode horses provided by the state, the latter horses which were their own property. Upon the Bargeers, Sivajee always reposed his chief confidence: indeed he permitted no force of the Sillidars to take the field till he had intermixed with them a Pagah, or band of his household troops, for the purpose of overawing the turbulent, and rendering perfect his system of intelligence. "The Mahratta horsemen," says Captain Grant, "are commonly dressed in a pair of tight breeches, covering the knee, a turban, which many of them fasten by passing a fold of it under the chin, a frock of quilted cotton, and a cloth round the waist, with which they generally gird on their swords in preference to securing them with their belts. The horseman is armed with a sword and shield; a proportion in each body carry matchlocks; but the great national weapon is the spear, in the use of which, and the management of their horses, they evince both grace and dexterity. The spearmen have generally a sword, and sometimes a shield; but the latter is unwieldy, and only carried in case the spear should be broken."..... "With respect to the horse's appointments," continues the same author, "the bridle consists of a single headstall of cotton rope, or leather, with a small, but very flexible bit. There is a second headstall over that of the bridle, to which is fixed a thong, or cotton band, tightly fastened to the girths, and thus forms a standing martingal. The Mahratta saddle is composed of two pieces, or sides of very thick felt, strongly sewed or tied together with thongs of cotton rope,

leaving a small space between the sides so as to prevent pressure on the horse's back-bone; attached to this is a crupper, made of cotton rope, frequently covered with a piece of coloured silk or broad cloth. When the saddle is put on, the horseman lays over it his blanket, sometimes a carpet, and any spare clothes he may have. Two cotton bags or pouches, tied together by a string, and thrown over the front part of the saddle, carry either provision or plunder; when all these are adjusted, the horseman mounts, and the last thing is to seize his spear, which is stuck by the horse's head in the ground. On the left side and hind part of the saddle, is suspended the totra, or feeding bag, in which the pegs for picketing the horse, and his head and heel ropes, are carried."

The discipline preserved in Sivajee's army was exceedingly strict—each man was held responsible for the behaviour of his comrade. Though plunder was not only permitted, but enjoined, no individual was permitted to retain his booty, the whole being brought in after every expedition, and given up to officers appointed by the state especially to receive it. But to counterbalance this, both horse and foot soldiers received regular pay, whilst the utmost attention was bestowed upon their comforts both in the field and in quarters. When in the field, however, no man was allowed, on pain of death, to carry a female follower along with him; whilst all were enjoined to offer no violence even to an enemy, unless opposed. Women were not, under any circumstances, to be molested; prisoners were to be treated, except reasons to the contrary were given, with the utmost kindness; and

wanton outrages, unordered by the general himself, were strictly prohibited. Again, it consisted not with the tactics of the Mahrattas to hazard general actions on open plains, when the desired object could be gained by desultory skirmishes or rapidity of movement. Hence the care with which they shunned coming into contact with their enemies, unless compelled, or tempted to fight by circumstances; whilst their marches were conducted with such celerity and secresy, that the power of choice was seldom taken away from them.

With respect again to the machinery employed in the direction of civil affairs, it was regulated, as nearly as the state of public opinion would allow, according to the ancient usages of the Hindoos in general. To assist the sovereign in a species of cabinet, there were the Peishwa, or prime minister; the Muzzumdar, or superintendant of finance; the Soornees, or general record keeper; the Wankannees, or keeper of private journals and letters; two Surnobuts, or chief commanders of infantry and cavalry; the Dubeer, or minister of foreign affairs; the Nyadeish, or superintendant of judicial proceedings; and the Nya Shastree, or expounder of Hindoo law. Such were the great officers of state, under whom were the officers of districts, pergunnahs, and villages, rising one above another in rank and consequence as the circles of their responsibility widened.

Whilst Sivajee was thus bringing into order the elements of a great empire, the chief authority over the Deccan was exercised by two men, both of whom chanced to be particularly friendly towards him. It was this circumstance, indeed, and this

alone, which enabled him to bring to a termination his great work; but the respite thus given from warlike proceedings, as it was little congenial to the spirit of the times, so it was not destined to be of long continuance. Sivajee was given to understand that his own capture, and that of his son, had been positively ordered by the emperor. As might be imagined, he was highly indignant at this treacherous proceeding, and he lost not a moment in anticipating his enemy, by commencing hostilities ere reinforcements could arrive. In an incredibly short space of time his plan for this campaign was matured, and more than his usual vigour was exhibited in the first steps taken towards carrying it into execution.

During his late reverses the two most important fortresses in his dominions, Singurh and Poorundhur, had been wrested from it; they were still retained, and as they effectually cut off the communication between Poona and Chakun, he resolved, at all hazards, to recover them. Yet as they were both commanded by brave governors, and both occupied by numerous garrisons of Rajpoots, serious doubts were entertained as to the practicability of the measure, till Tannajee Malloosray, having been consulted on the occasion, not only declared the measure practicable, but offered, on certain conditions, to conduct the attack upon Singurh. To these Sivajee readily assented; and Tannajee, being permitted to select 1000 Mawulees and to carry his younger brother along with him, set out in high spirits upon his enterprise.

Singurh is situated on the eastern side of the great Syhadree range, not far from the point at

which the Poorundhur hills branch off into the Deccan; with these hills it communicates only on the east and west by ridges of a prodigious height and extremely narrow; on the south and north it presents the appearance of a huge rugged mountain, with an ascent of half a mile, in many parts perpendicular. After arriving at this ledge, there is an immense craggy precipice of black rock, upwards of forty feet high, which is again surmounted by a massy stone wall, flanked and defended by towers. The fort itself is of a triangular shape, its interior measuring upwards of two miles in circumference; and as its exterior presents on all sides the stupendous barrier just described, ingress, except through the gates, seems absolutely impracticable. From the summit, when the atmosphere is clear, is seen to the east the narrow and beautiful valley of the Neera; to the north a great plain, with Poona in the foreground; whilst to the south and west appear boundless masses of rolling mountains, lost in the blue clouds, or mingled by distance with the sky. In that quarter lies Raigurh, from which place the thousand Mawulees, selected by Tannajee Maloosray, set out in small parties by paths known only to themselves, and "on the ninth night of the dark half of the moon in the month of Magh (February)," the whole were united under the fortress.

Tannajee immediately divided his men into two bands, one of which he directed to remain till called upon, at a little distance, while the other lodged themselves undiscovered at the foot of the rocks. One man now advanced towards a point particularly difficult of access; and, finding it un-

guarded, he mounted the precipice and made fast a ladder of ropes. His comrades followed singly and in profound silence; but scarce three hundred had entered when an alarm spread, and the attention of the garrison was drawn towards the quarter threatened. A sentinel challenged and was answered by an arrow that stretched him lifeless; but as a noise was still heard of voices and people running to arms, Tannajee gave the word to push forward. The bowmen accordingly plied their arrows at random, though, as far as might be, in the direction of the sound; till a blaze of blue lights and torches, kindled by the garrison, showed the Rajpoots armed or arming, and exhibited their assailants. A close and desperate conflict then ensued, in which the Mawulees, though fearfully outnumbered, gained ground, when the brave Tannajee, as he cheered them on, was shot dead. Now then the soldiers lost all confidence, they turned round and fled towards the spot where they had escaladed, when the reserve, headed by Sooryajee, their late commander's brother, arrived. He rallied the fugitives, exclaiming aloud, "Who among you will leave his father's remains to be tossed into a pit by the Mhars?" He assured them that the ropes were cut away, and that nothing remained except to prove themselves worthy of being called Sivajee's Mawulees. His manner and speeches were not thrown away. The fugitives rallied, and with loud shouts of *Hur Hur Mahdeo*, renewed the charge. Finally, after a sanguinary action, in which five hundred of the garrison fell, and which cost Sivajee full three hundred of his choicest soldiers, this important

fortress was carried. But the conquest, desirable as it was, produced no feeling of exultation in Sivajee's bosom. When told that his friend had fallen, he turned mournfully away from such as offered their congratulations on his victory. "The den* is taken," said he, "but the lion is slain; we have gained a fort, but alas I have lost Tannajee Maloosray."

The capture of Singurh was soon followed by other operations, all of them equally honourable to Sivajee's renown, and equally hurtful to his enemies. Instead of losing any portion of their alacrity during the short peace with which they had been favoured, the Mahrattas appear to have acquired fresh vigour; for towns were surprised and entered ere the garrisons found time to shut their gates, and whole districts plundered, which the inhabitants considered safe from insult. All the forts which he had lost in the last campaign, were, by this means, recovered, extensive regions belonging to Bijapoor were reduced, and Surat, the most important harbour belonging to the emperor, was again plundered. The kings of Bijapoor and Golconda, too, were both compelled to pay contributions; the former to the amount of three, the latter of four lacks of rupees. It was in vain that general after general was despatched from Agra, to bring this daring marauder to terms. He baffled their pursuit, turned round upon them when least expected, cut off detachments, and attacked whole divisions; yet he never permitted himself to be drawn into a battle upon the issue of

* The word Singurh means a Lion's Den.

which his fate might depend. Thus, for the space of many years, was the war carried on, without in the slightest degree exhausting the resources of a chief, the vigour of whose genius, not less than the spirit of his followers, seemed to increase in proportion to the demands made upon them.

It is not necessary to enter further into detail touching the several exploits performed by this very extraordinary man. It is enough to state, that by allying himself sometimes with the King of Golconda against the rival sovereign of Bijapoor, sometimes with the sovereign of Bijapoor against him of Golconda, and sometimes with both or either, against the Moguls, and occasionally with the Moguls against them, he continued to wrest from all numerous additions to his empire. After harassing his enemies in the west, for example, he poured down upon Mysore, swept through it like a whirlwind, and penetrated into the Carnatic. The strong holds of Gingee and Vellore were taken, Madras itself threatened, and the province of Tanjore reduced; after which Sivajee returned, loaded with booty, into Concan. Nor were these mere predatory excursions, harassing to the enemy while in progress, but productive of no permanent benefits to himself: not only did Sivajee cause his authority to be acknowledged in Concan, a territory measuring four hundred miles in length, and one hundred and twenty in breadth; but one half of the Carnatic, though separated from Concan by a space of nearly three hundred miles, became his likewise by right of conquest.

In the progress of the operations which have been so inadequately described above, Sivajee

came more than once into contact with the English, whose factory at Surat was plundered by his troops of property to the amount of ten thousand pagodas. The merchants remonstrated against this proceeding, and an embassy was sent from Bombay, to conclude, if possible, a treaty with this formidable chief; but though he repaid the money, and promised protection, he refused to negotiate with them on any thing like a footing of equality. On another occasion his feeling towards our countrymen seems not to have been so friendly. When he quitted the Carnatic, after effecting in it the conquests last referred to, he left behind him a strong force, with directions to embrace the earliest opportunity of surprising the Dutch and English settlements at Pullicat, Sadras, and Madras; and though these orders were not obeyed, the records in the last-mentioned colony afford ample proof that its inhabitants looked for no more favourable treatment from the Mahrattas.

Sivajee died at Raigurh, on the 5th of April, 1680, in the fifty-third year of his age, of an inflammation in the lungs, brought on by reckless and continued exposure to the elements. His character has of course been painted in very different colours, according to the prejudices of those who have entered upon the task; but the writers of all nations unite in representing him as one of the most extraordinary men that ever appeared, even in India. There can be little doubt that he regarded himself as raised up by heaven for the express purpose of delivering his country from the oppression of strangers. He spoke at least, and acted on all public occasions, as the champion of

the gods against the violators of their temples, whilst his followers beheld in him the object of a specific tradition, "whose approach virgins should announce with songs of joy, and the skies by raining down flowers."* The whole business of his life accordingly consisted in devising and carrying into execution plans hostile to the Mahomedans, whom he abhorred with equal bitterness, whether they took the name of subjects of the Mogul, or obeyed one or other of the kings of the Deccan. Hence it was that he never contracted an alliance with one or other, except for the purpose of effecting something favourable to his own views, which extended to the absolute expulsion of the professors of Islamism, not only from the Deccan, but from India.

Sivajee was brave, politic, wily, yet sincere. In private his habits were simple, even to parsimony. In his manner towards his own subjects, he is stated to have been frank, endearing, and devoid of every thing approaching to ostentation. He moved among them without fear, and altogether unguarded; and he did so without danger, because he was both beloved and respected. As a soldier he was enterprising, yet cautious—capable of daring any hazard, yet always disposed to conquer by stratagem rather than by hard blows. He was not cruel, though he occasionally, for the sake of inspiring terror, committed shocking atrocities; nor were his inroads attended by harm to the cultivators, unless they, by some act of hostility, ex-

* The concluding words of a prophecy, genuine or spurious, which was in circulation about the period of Sivajee's birth.

cited his anger. But the most remarkable talent which belonged to him was, perhaps, his power to controul the passions and prejudices both of friends and enemies. He repeatedly set in array against each other chiefs who had combined for his destruction; and whenever the arrangement had served its purpose, he caused them to become again reconciled. The intelligence, likewise, which he obtained of the designs, not less than of the movements of his opponents, was altogether astonishing; indeed, he spared no cost to secure it, and his spies seem never to have deceived him. His great enemy, Arungzebe, when informed of his decease, after exhibiting indecent marks of joy, bore the highest testimony to his abilities. "He was a great captain," said the Mogul, "and the only one who has had the management to raise a new kingdom, while I have been endeavouring to destroy the ancient sovereignties of India. My armies have been employed against him for nineteen years, and, nevertheless his state has always been increasing."*

Sivajee was succeeded in the sovereignty by Sambah, or Sambahjee, the elder of his two sons, though not till after an abortive attempt had been made to set up his younger brother. Sambah inherited all his father's antipathy to the Moguls, against whom he carried on operations with considerable effect. He cut off many detached parties—harassed larger armies by compelling them to march from point to point at all seasons of the year—and enriched himself and his followers with

* Orme's Historical Fragments, p. 95.

the plunder of some towns and the ransom exacted from others. But Sambah's victories, like the early successes of Sivajee, were in a great measure attributable to the multifarious operations upon which Arungzebe embarked elsewhere. It is not our intention to describe these, however interesting, at length, but it will be necessary, to a right understanding of the existing condition of India, to give of them at least a general outline.

About a year previous to the death of Sivajee, Arungzebe found himself involved in war with the Afgans, who descended from their mountains in great force, and laid waste the provinces adjoining. Hostilities continued for about eighteen months; at the conclusion of which the Afgans were brought to terms, and a check imposed upon future aggressions by the erection of a chain of forts along the base of their hills. It does not appear how far the emperor saw reason to distrust, at this juncture, the loyalty of his Rajpoot feudatories; we find him, however, at the close of the Afgan war, adopting violent measures, which soon involved him in a tedious and doubtful contest with these chieftains, to whom he had imprudently submitted the choice either to abjure their faith, or to pay for themselves and their subjects, a capitation tax. They rejected each alternative; and, though driven from the plains, offered a stout resistance among the mountains of Ajmere. The result was, that Arungzebe, after a prodigious waste of men and treasure, was obliged quietly to abandon his pretensions; and to leave the Rajpoots in the same political position which they had occupied under his predecessors.

It was owing to these wars, rendered the more formidable in consequence of the revolt of one of his sons, that Arungzebe found neither leisure nor opportunity to act with his accustomed vigour in the Deccan. The Rajpoots, however, were no sooner appeased, than he marched with a numerous army to Arungabad; from whence the prince Shaw Alum was despatched into Concan, for the purpose of reducing the Mahratta fortresses along the coast. The prince was not successful in this expedition; for the climate was unfavourable to the health of the troops, and provisions were not to be found. Sultan Azim, another of the emperor's sons, to whom the subjugation of Bijapore had been entrusted, met with no better fortune than his brother; he was defeated in two general actions, and compelled to fall back. But worse, perhaps than even these, remained behind. The kings of Golconda and Bijapore entered into a strict alliance, Sambah joining with apparent cordiality in the league; and the force which they brought into the field shook the resolution of the emperor, who retired, on some frivolous excuse, to Agra. The Mahrattas made ample use of the opportunity thus afforded them. They pushed a corps of 6000 horse across the Tapti and the Nerbudda, which entered the city of Barroach, where they proclaimed Akbar, Arungzebe's rebel son, emperor; and after plundering the place, retired, without the loss of a man, to their own country.

It is not very easy to explain whence the indecision arose which at this time marked the conduct of Arungzebe. For several years he refrained from punishing the presumption of his enemies,

though he never formally relinquished his claim to the sovereignty of their country; but in 1687 he awoke, as it were, from his lethargy, and once more directed the whole force of the empire southwards. All his projects, on this occasion, were crowned with success. His son Akbar, hopeless of making head against him, fled to Persia; Golcondah was totally subdued, and Bijapore, after a vigorous resistance, surrendered at discretion. But the matter which delighted him most of all was the capture of Sambah, who was taken by surprise in one of his hill-forts. He was immediately put to death; and an army being pushed with promptitude into Concan, Rayree itself, the Mahratta capital, fell, with the wife and children of Sambah, into the hands of the Moguls. Nevertheless, a leader was not long wanting to that high-spirited people. Rama, the brother of Sambah, escaped from Concan, crossed, by way of Seringapatam, to the Carnatic, and threw himself into Ginjee, where, being closely besieged by the bulk of the imperial army, he held out, with astonishing perseverance, during six entire years. It will readily be imagined that a breathing-space so well-timed, was not misapplied by his warlike countrymen. Though they could not venture to meet the Moguls in battle, and though their forts were one after another reduced, they nevertheless issued from their mountains under various chiefs, and, spreading themselves over Bijapore, Hyderabad, Berar, Khandesh, and even Malwa, collected immense booty wherever they went. It was to no purpose that the Moguls moved hither and thither, as often as an alarm of the approach of the marau-

ders was given. Ere they could reach the spot threatened, the evil had already befallen it; and such was the celerity with which the freebooters retreated, that an opportunity rarely offered even of taking revenge.

In this manner the war was carried on during several years, without leading to any satisfactory or determinate results. Wherever they could be reached, the Mahrattas were, indeed, defeated, and, but for the natural strength of their fastnesses, their total subjugation must have taken place; but as they always found among these a sure place of refuge, so they ceased not to reject every proposition which implied even the semblance of submission. It must be confessed, however, that the administration of Arungzebe betrayed, about this time, many of the infirmities of age. Jealous of his more powerful Omrahs, whose numerous household troops could have repulsed the invaders, or chastised their invasions, he entrusted to none of them the command of the provinces which lay most exposed to danger; but placed there men of low birth, who were contented to plunder the very people whom it was their duty to foster and protect. It was thus that the Mahrattas found the whole country south from the Nerbudda open to their incursions; whilst so long as such a state of things continued, all hope of reducing them was necessarily futile. Such was the condition of affairs when the death of the emperor occurred. He expired in the camp at Ahmudnuggar on the 21st of February, 1707, in the forty-eighth year of his reign, and ninety-third of his age.

Among all the Mahomedan sovereigns by whom

the throne of Hindostan has been occupied, there was not perhaps one whose character furnishes more room as well for panegyric as for censure, than Arungzebe. Destitute of the chivalrous gallantry which so eminently belonged to Baber, and falling far short of Akbar in the comprehensiveness and liberality of his political views, he was nevertheless possessed both of courage and sagacity in no ordinary degree, though the lustre of these qualities was in a great measure tarnished by a strong tendency to duplicity, for which reasonable motives could not always be assigned. It was a sort of rule with Arungzebe never to trust that to fair and manly dealing which could be accomplished by chicanery and deceit. In war his chief instrument of conquest was the stirring up of distrust among the enemies to whom he was opposed; in peace he governed provinces, by never permitting his viceroys to imagine themselves, for one moment, secure. Yet, with one or two memorable exceptions, Arungzebe acted towards his subjects at large as a just and even a considerate prince. We have already said, that during his reign the utmost lenity was displayed in the collection of the public revenues; and the utmost care bestowed in remedying whatever distresses the inclemency of seasons, or other natural causes, brought upon different parts of the empire. It is true that he sullied the lustre of his early years by an unjust and impolitic attack upon the Rajpoots, which had well nigh brought his grey hairs with shame and sorrow to the grave; but it must be remembered, in extenuation of that proceeding, that the Rajpoots were a powerful people, existing

in a species of independence in the very heart of his dominions. Besides, it were unfair towards Arungzebe to deny to him the sincerity which we attribute to the European sovereigns who were his contemporaries. His attempt to convert by force all his subjects to the faith of Mahomed, was doubtless a cruel as well as an unwise measure; but it was neither more cruel nor more unwise than the line of policy which produced the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

Arungzebe sacrificed, without scruple, the lives of his nearest relatives to secure to himself the throne. Far be it from us to defend him here; yet let not the obvious fact be forgotten, that he only did to them what either, or all would have done to him, had fortune placed the power in their hands which she entrusted to his. The truth is, that the son of an Indian sovereign had but the loathsome choice submitted to him of becoming either the executioner of his brothers, or their victim; and Arungzebe, in preferring the former office, transgressed no law, either of the religion or the customs of his country. Nor is it to be placed out of view, in considering this point, that of all the sons of Shah Jehan, he was confessedly the best qualified to succeed his father. With as much personal courage as Dara, and not less foresight than Sujah, he was free from the rashness of the one and the rapacity of the other; whilst for the habits of debauchery, to which Morad was a slave, he ever entertained a thorough abhorrence. If, therefore, it be allowable to judge him by the law to which he, in common with other Mussulmans, was subject, no truth can be more self-evident than

that his title to the crown of India was just; since the Koran has expressly declared that empire belongs to him, and to him alone, who is most worthy to wear it.

Arungzebe was the first sovereign of Hindostan who equipped and maintained a navy for the purposes of harassing his enemies, and protecting his own maritime trade. This fleet was commanded by one Siddee, an Abyssinian adventurer, whose father had served the king of Bijapore against Sivajee. The Mahratta, however, contriving to surprise Dunda Rajapore, a sea-port to the southward of Bombay, of which the elder Siddee was governor, the king became so indignant that he caused his admiral to be put to death; upon which the son of the Abyssinian passed over, with all his vessels, to Arungzebe. Many encounters took place between the Siddees and the Mahratta craft, as well as one or two skirmishes, in which cruizers belonging to the English took part; but these operations are memorable rather because they were the first of the kind with which the annals of India make us acquainted, than on account of the importance of the results to which, in either case, they led.

CHAPTER VIII.

Accession of Shah Aulum—His weakness, and murder—Accession and sudden death of two brothers Rupheh—Influence of the Syeds—Mahomed Shah Nizam Al Mulk's hostility towards the Syeds—The Downfal of the Syeds—The Nizam rebels—Decline of the Mogul Empire.

ARUNGZEBE left behind him three sons, of whom the eldest, Mahomed Mauzim, succeeded to the throne. This prince, who at an early age had assumed the title of Shah Aulum, did not, however, attain his new dignity without the usual prelude of a civil war, and the slaughter of his nearest relatives. His claims, indeed, were at one moment very feebly supported, his brother, Azim Shaw, having secured the army; but Azim was both an imprudent, and a haughty prince. After alienating the affections of his adherents by a needless display of self-sufficiency, he rejected the proposal made to him by Shah Aulum, to divide the empire, and risking a battle, was defeated and slain, together with two of his sons, who followed him to the field. A similar fate attended the third son of Arungzebe, by name Kaum Buksh. That prince, who had been nominated to the government of Bijapore, and to whom Shah Aulum offered the additional dignity of viceroy of Golconda, was tempted, not more by the predictions

of his astrologer than by his own vanity, to aim at supreme power; and venturing to meet the imperial army, was deserted by his chiefs, grievously wounded, and taken. He died on the same evening, after receiving every proof from Shah Aulum that his obstinacy was more lamented than blamed by his generous relative.

Shah Aulum, thus freed from the danger of competition, exhibited symptoms of a strong desire to spend the remainder of his days in peace. He appointed one Zulfeccar Kan, Nizam or deputy, to manage the affairs of the Deccan, with injunctions rather to consolidate the conquests already acquired, than push them further; and, carrying his principal nobility along with him, marched back, though in the height of the rainy season, to Agra. But fate had decreed that his reign, short as it was, should not be one of tranquillity. He was scarcely returned to his capital ere he found himself involved in disputes with the Rajpoots, whose successful opposition to the designs of his predecessor tempted them to aim now at virtual independence; and such was the amount of their resources, that the emperor considered it prudent to rest satisfied with a very limited obedience. This was the more necessary, since the Seiks, a confederation of fanatics, who had been troublesome both to Arungzebe and his predecessors, began, about the period of Shah Aulum's accession, to renew their depredations, and the emperor was in consequence reduced to the necessity of taking the field formally against them. He marched into Lahore, drove their chief, Banda, through Sirhinde to the mountains, and checked, if he could not

absolutely annihilate the power of the marauders. *

* The following account of this singular people is taken from Scott's History of the Deccan, and the narrative is fully substantiated by the researches of Sir John Malcolm, Mr. Forster, Dr. Buchanan, Sir D. Ochterlony, Mr. Elphinstone, Mr. Macauley, and others. "The chief, against whom Shah Aulum bore arms, was lineally descended," says Mr. Scott, "from an adopted son of Nannuk Shaw, the founder of the sect of the Seiks, in the reign of the Emperor Baber. Nannuk was the son of an Hindoo grain merchant of the Kuttree tribe, and being a youth of good capacity and pleasing manners, engaged the notice of Seyd Houssim, a celebrated Dervish, by whose instructions he made great progress in learning, and became an admirer of the speculative and contemplative divinity of the Mussulman devotees. Having selected some of their tenets, he translated them into the Punjaubee dialect, with additions of his own, and called the composition Kirrunt, which became the guide of his disciples, who at first formed only a religious sect, without laying claim to political consequence. Nannuk left two sons, but neither of them assumed the supremacy of their order, which was given by election to Augud, one of their father's followers, who held it thirteen years. He, having no son, was succeeded by a disciple, who presided over the order twenty-two years, and, though he had sons, he placed Ramdass, his son-in-law, in the direction. Ramdass lived only seven years, and was succeeded by his son Goorroh Arjun, whose son, Hir Govind, inherited his dignity. Hir Govind's eldest son dying, he was succeeded by his grandson, Hir Roy, who, after seventeen years, left this world, and was succeeded by his infant son, Hir Kishen. He having no issue, his uncle, Teeghe Bahadur, a younger son of Hir Govind, was elected, but was put to death, as a dangerous heretic, in the seventeenth year of Alumgeer's (Arungzebe's) reign, he having collected his followers, and levied contributions from the inhabitants of his neighbourhood, in conjunction with Hafee Adam, a Mussulman devotee, and his votaries. Some time after the death of Teeghe Bahadur, his son, Goorah Govind, having collected his followers, gave them arms and horses, which till his time they had never used, and began to commit depredations; but he

Shah Aulum reigned in all five years, with the reputation of respectable talents, and great humanity. It is said of him that he never spilt the blood of a rival, except in the field; and that the sons of his rebel brothers were, on all occasions, treated as his own. He died suddenly in his camp near Lahore, in the year 1712.

The four sons of Shah Aulum, each at the head of his retainers, chanced to be in camp when their father expired; and a series of plotting and intrigue, the ordinary consequence on such occasions, immediately ensued. This was followed before long by open violence, which placed the crown on the head of Moiz ad Dien; a weak prince, who owed his elevation to Zulfeccar Khan, Soubahdar of the

was soon obliged to fly, and two of his sons, being taken prisoners, were put to death. Being desirous of returning to his home, he prevailed on some Afgauns to conduct him, disguised as one of their dotees, through the army stationed at Sirhinde, and for the remainder of his life kept himself retired, having lost his faculties in grief for his sons. He ordered his disciples to wear blue, and leave their beards and the hair of their heads unshaved, which they do to this day. He was succeeded by Bunda, one of his followers, who was also called Gooroh Govind. This man obtained great power, and whilst Shah Aulum was in Deccan against Kaum Buksh, collected his followers to revenge the death of his predecessor's sons. He committed the greatest cruelties on the Mussulmans, in every advantage, showing no quarter to age or sex, and even ripping up women with child.

"The Seiks admit proselytes from any sect. They profess deism: their ceremonies I am not informed of. They mourn at a birth, and rejoice at a death. It is said every proselyte is obliged to drink the water in which some Seeks have washed their feet mixed with hog's blood—a horrid abomination to a pious Mussulman. Hindoo proselytes drink water in which a few drops of a cow's blood have been mingled."

Deccan, and his subsequent downfal to his own vices. He assumed the style of Jehandar Shah, but played his part so wretchedly, that Ferokseer, the son of one of his brothers, conspired against him. There was both treachery and irresolution among the followers of Jehandar Shah; one army, which had been sent forward under his son to repress the sedition, deserted its colours, and went over to the enemy; another, with which he himself endeavoured to stop the tide of rebellion, sustained a signal defeat. The emperor now lost all courage, and fleeing, with his friend Zulfeccar into Delhi, they were betrayed by its governor to Ferokseer, who caused them both to be put to death with circumstances of extreme cruelty and insult.

Two brothers, by name Hussein and Abdoola Syed, had been the chief instruments in bringing about the accession of Ferokseer to the throne. They were both men of talent, ambitious, and overbearing; and they were both elevated to the highest stations which subjects were permitted to hold. On Hussein was bestowed the office of Bukshi, or paymaster to the forces, with the title of Ameer ul Omrah; on Abdoola that of Vizier, with the title of Kootub ul Mulk; whilst the entire authority of the state may be said to have been reposed, in a great degree, in their hands. Not that this was done voluntarily on the part of Ferokseer, who feared at least as much as he respected them; but their adherents were numerous; they knew how to work on the emperor's weaknesses, and for a time, at least, they were without a rival. Nevertheless they exercised their dominion with

so little moderation, that even Ferokseer began before long to writhe under it; and no great while elapsed ere he set himself to the task of devising schemes for their overthrow.

His first measure was to separate the brothers by employing Hussein, by far the abler of the two, in a war against the Rajpoots. The Bukshi marched into Marwar at the head of an army so numerous, that the Rajah, Ajeet Sing, deemed it hopeless to resist, and, in spite of the assurances which were privately conveyed to him that resistance would be highly approved at court, he came to a treaty of submission and alliance.* The consequence was that Hussein returned to the capital in time to prevent any advantage from being taken of his absence; and the emperor was reduced to the necessity of devising some other expedient in order to effect his purpose. It so happened that the extravagant ambition of Hussein soon furnished the opportunity sought. Regardless of the superior claims of Chun Koolish Khan,† a powerful

* A marriage between the emperor and Ajeet Sing's daughter constituted one of the terms of the treaty now entered into. Preparations were made to solemnize it with great pomp, when the emperor was attacked by a troublesome illness, which was removed only by the skill of Mr. Hamilton, a medical gentleman in the service of the English East India Company. He sought and obtained as his reward the first phirman of free trade ever granted to his employers.

† This chieftain, who had lived on hostile terms with Zulfeccar Khan, and enjoyed the reputation of great abilities, was recommended partly on these accounts, and partly by his influence with the Tooranee Moguls, to the notice of government. He was appointed to the Soubahdarry, or regency of the Deccan, and decorated with the style of Nizam ul Mulk,

and highly-gifted Toorannee chief, on whom the Soubahdarry of the Deccan had lately been bestowed, Hussein, at his first interview, demanded that the office should be transferred to him; and Ferokseer, trusting by this means to be delivered from the presence of an enemy, readily acceded to the request. But fresh difficulties arose. Hussein, though covetous of the wealth and influence of such a command, was by no means disposed to quit the capital; and positively refused to exercise his functions otherwise than by deputy. After a violent contention, however, he was at last persuaded to set out for the Deccan, though not till he had assured his master, that if any mischief were aimed at his brother, he should in twenty days return to take ample vengeance on his enemies.

Baffled on all hands by the superior cunning of his ministers, Ferokseer now sought to attain by violence that which guile seemed unable to effect. He sent private instructions to Daood Khan Punnee, the Deputy Soubahdar of Deccan, to attack, immediately on his arrival in the province, his principal; and Daood being a man of great courage and extraordinary strength, scrupled not to obey the warrant. He assembled a force consisting partly of his own adherents, partly of the followers of a Mahratta chief named Neemajee Sindia, and engaged the troops of Hussein. But at the moment when victory had declared in his favour, a matchlock ball pierced Daood's brain, and Hus-

(composer of the state,) a common title, which he rendered remarkable in the modern history of India by transmitting it, with a kingdom, to his posterity.

sein again, to the excessive chagrin of the emperor, escaped the toils.

For a short space after intelligence of the above event reached him, Ferokseer seems to have resigned himself, in hopeless indolence, to his fate. The Vizier held over him as much controul as his own vicious habits left him leisure to exercise, and the Omrahs, destitute of a leader on whom they could depend, made no attempt to remove the yoke. But if he ceased to struggle against an influence which he abhorred, Ferokseer at least indulged his natural ferocity, by torturing to death Banda, the Patriarch of the Seiks, who about this time fell into his hands. That chief, recovering from the losses which he had sustained in Shah Aulum's reign, had again taken the field in Lahore; and by open rapine and secret assassination rendered his name terrible to the inhabitants. He fought several battles with the imperial armies, in some of which he displayed great talent; but borne down by numbers, he was at last driven for shelter within the walls of one of his fortresses. Famine compelled him, after a protracted resistance, to surrender, when his followers, to the amount of 700 men, were crucified, and himself put to death " by the tearing of his flesh with red-hot pincers."

In the meanwhile Hussein having arrived at Arungabad, began to take measures for checking the power of the Mahrattas, which, during the confusion incident upon late events, had risen to a mischievous and even formidable height. Under a new sovereign, Sahoo Rajah, the son of Sambajee and grandson of Sivajee, that warlike people

had not only resumed their former attitude, but rendered the whole of the Deccan in a great degree tributary. Towards the close of Arungzebe's reign, the widow of Rama, Samagee's brother, acting as guardian of the young Rajah, had proposed to stay the predatory excursions of her subjects on condition of receiving a tenth of the revenue collected (called the Desmukee) from the imperial provinces south of the Nerbudda. Arungzebe rejected the proposition with scorn; but the Soubahdar, whom Shah Aulum left in charge of the Deccan, being naturally well-disposed towards the Mahrattas, not only reversed this determination, but agreed to purchase tranquillity at the increased cost of the Chout, or fourth part of the revenue. When Nizam al Mulk came into power, the demands of the Mahrattas were once more negatived, and a desultory war ensued; but ere time had been afforded to bring it to a successful conclusion, the Nizam was in his turn superseded by Hussein. At first this chief exerted himself strenuously to oppose the growing influence of the Mahrattas. He sent an army of 7000 men to reduce a chain of mud forts, by means of which they commanded the road from Surat to Boorahampore; but it was inveigled into an ambuscade and cut to pieces. He advanced in person with a larger force, drove the enemy from the open country, and laid siege to Sattara, the residence of Sahoo Raja himself; but before the place had yet began to suffer the miseries of a blockade, news reached him from Delhi, which caused an immediate change in his plans. It was communicated to him that the emperor, supported by Nizam al

Mulk, the Rajpoot princes, and other powerful chiefs, was about to wrest all authority from the hands of the Vizier; and that the ruin of his own house could be averted only by his prompt return to the capital. Hussein was not the man to hesitate in such circumstances. He patched up a peace with the Mahrattas, though at the expense not only of the Chout, but of the Desmuckee likewise; and turning the heads of his columns towards Agra, set forward at a quick pace.

The truth however was, that less cause of alarm existed than Hussein had been led to believe. Incapable of acting with judgment, even for the attainment of his own ends, the emperor, instead of putting himself into the hands of the Nizam, or his father-in-law, chose as his chief adviser in the meditated revolution, a low-born instrument of his pleasures; on whom he made no secret of his intention to bestow the highest honours under the crown. The nobles, though not less weary than their master, of the insolence of the Syeds, saw no inducement to exertion in the prospect of passing from the obedience of one fellow-subject to that of another; and they in consequence withdrew, one by one, from the capital, as soon as the approach of Hussein with his army became known. Jeysing, the Rajpoot prince of Ambere, alone urged the emperor to place his fate on the hazard of a battle; but Ferokseer possessed not sufficient manhood to venture upon such a step. He implored the forgiveness of his ministers; threw himself into their hands, and was with little tumult put to death, after being decoyed from among his women and cast into a dungeon.

The influence of the Syeds was now irresistible, and they used it to establish upon the throne Rupheh-al-Kudder, a grandson of Arungzebe, by a daughter of Akbar; a prince who laboured under a rapid decline at the moment of his election. He wore the crown barely five months, when he was succeeded by his brother Rupheh-al-Dirgaut, who became, within three months, a victim to the same malady which cut off his immediate predecessor. An attempt was now made by the governor of the citadel of Agra to set up Akbar, the youngest son of Alumgeer, but the Syeds were too prompt in their proceedings to permit this, or any other conspiracy, to rob them of their power. They made choice of Rooshun Akter, the grandson of Shah Aulum, a youth seventeen years of age; who assumed the ensigns of royalty with the name of Mahomed Shah.

Mahomed Shah, who had spent his early life in seclusion, and acted in every thing by the advice of his mother, committed himself, with apparent satisfaction, to the guidence of the Syeds, and for a time all things appeared to go on as the best friends of the empire could desire. The ambition of Nizam-al-Mulk being gratified by the government of Malwa, he cared not to oppose the projects of his rivals; a seditious movement at Allahabad ended with the sudden death of the governor; whilst the nephew of the late rebel was induced to surrender his strong holds by the offer of another but wealthier province, that of Oude. Yet was the calm which now prevailed in all quarters like the stillness of a summer's day when thunder clouds are collecting in the atmosphere.

There was not a noble in the provinces, or about the court, to whom the influence of the Syeds proved not distasteful, with the exception of those only who looked to them for further promotion, or depended upon them for subsistence; and the feeling of envy, though concealed for a season, soon led to acts of open and desperate hostility.

The state of Malwa, where every petty chieftain and zemindar was in arms, induced Nizam al Mulk to increase his forces; a measure which was not beheld by the Syeds without alarm. They sent to propose that he should resign in favour of Hussein, who might, as they alleged, both regulate the affairs of the Deccan and attend to his duties in the capital, from a position so centrical; and they suggested his acceptance in exchange of any of the four Soubahs, Mooltan, Kandesh, Agra, or Allahabad. But the Nizam, whose reconciliation with his rivals had never been sincere, rejected the proposition with disdain. He made use of terms* likewise in his letter which left no doubt in their minds that his ultimate designs were hostile; and that leisure to mature his plans might not be afforded, they despatched an army against him.

The Nizam, who seems to have anticipated some such movement, instead of advancing to meet his enemies, crossed at once into the Deccan, where he had secured many friends. The castle of Azere and the city of Boorahanpoore both opened their gates; his relative, Eiwery Khan, Souhbadar of Berar, joined him with a strong reinforcement;

* His expressions were: "I am not ungrateful, I can swear with truth; I am not like you, I can swear with truth."

a Mahratta chief, who had quarrelled with Sahoo Rajah, augmented his strength, and a multitude of Zemindars followed the example. In a word, he soon collected a force so superior to that of the Syeds, that the latter, venturing to engage, sustained a signal defeat, and the whole of Deccan, with the solitary exception of Dowlatabad, submitted to the Nizam's authority. Nor was it of trifling advantage to his cause that the Emperor, by indirect means, made him aware of his own abhorrence of the state of restraint in which the ministers kept him; whilst the ministers themselves, by a display of indecision such as on no previous occasion appeared in their proceedings, cast a damp upon the courage of their own adherents, in the highest degree hurtful to men in their circumstances.

There was at this time a Hindoo, by name Ruttun Chund, who filled the situation of Dewan, or chief minister of finance, at the court of Delhi. Attached to the interests of the Syeds, with which his own were closely interwoven, he recommended that the Nizam should be formally confirmed in the government of the Deccan, which he had already won for himself; but the pride of the brothers would not stoop to the appearance of conciliating one who made no secret of his hostility. After numerous changes of plan, therefore, they came to the determination of despatching the emperor, under the tutelage of Hussein, at the head of an army, into the Deccan; whilst Abdoolla should remain at home to secure the fidelity of Hindostan Proper. The movement was accordingly made; but there went with the royal cortege, a band of

men who had sworn the death of his and their leader. At the head of them was Mahomed Ahmud Khan, a Tooranee Omrah, of high courage and some influence; he was supported by Saadut Khan, afterwards Nabob of Oude, and Hyder Khan; whilst the Emperor himself, from whom the plot was not concealed, expressed, at least, no dissatisfaction with its object. No difficulty was found in carrying the conspiracy into execution. Hyder Khan, on whom the lot fell to strike the blow, having approached Hussein's palanquin, under the pretext of presenting a petition, stabbed him in the side with his dagger, and the stroke was given with such violence and precision that the Ameer al Omrah fell dead to the ground.

A tumult immediately followed, during which the assassin was cut to pieces; but so well had affairs been arranged, that Hussein's last injunction to "Kill the emperor," was uttered in vain. The majority of the troops, on the contrary, adhered to their sovereign, who gave up the tents of his late Bukshi to plunder, and, countermarching on the instant, hurried back to crush Abdoolla at Delhi. A great battle was fought at Shahpore, in which the Vizier was defeated and taken, and Mahomed Shah entered his capital with the state and pomp of a victor.

Whatever might be the errors of which the Syeds had been guilty, it required but a short experience of the untrammelled government of the emperor to prove that nature had not endowed him with the faculties necessary in the head of a great monarch. Pleasure, in its lowest and most debasing forms, constituted the sole pursuit to

which he devoted himself, and the affairs of the provinces fell, as a necessary consequence, into terrible confusion. His first act of glaring impolicy consisted in an attempt to wrest from the Rajah Ajeet Sing the government of Guzerat and Ajmere, for which he held a phirman for life. The Rajah refused to surrender his privileges, took up arms, and compelled Mahomed to enter into a compromise. This disturbance was scarcely appeased, when the Afgans in the vicinity of Peshawir took the field, and, routing the troops employed against them, made the son of the governor prisoner. These, with many other calamities of a similar nature, caused all classes to turn their eyes with impatient longings towards Nizam al Mulk, who was recalled to Delhi, and, with every mark of respect, invested with the Vizierat; but even he failed to exercise any beneficial control over the loose passions of the sovereign. On the contrary, as he felt himself to be, in spite of his merits, an object of ridicule to the loose companions by whom the emperor was continually surrounded, he soon became disgusted with office, and withdrew, on pretext of suppressing an insurrection at Guzerat, from the capital. Saadut Khan was at the same time despatched to his government of Oude, and the divan was left without one solid mind to guide its deliberations.

Whilst the emperor thus degraded himself in the eyes of his subjects in general, the Nizam, after allaying disturbances in Guzerat, marched into Malwa, which, without waiting for any other sanction besides the dictates of his own humour, he annexed to the government of the Deccan. He

then returned to the capital, but finding that affairs were still as negligently conducted as before, he determined to act henceforth with a view only to his own interests. He abandoned the court without so much as condescending to take leave, though not till Mahomed had issued secret instructions for his assassination; and, defeating a party of troops which endeavoured, under the governor of Hyderabad, to intercept him, retired in safety to the Deccan. Mahomed, who hated not less than he feared the Nizam, instantly deprived him of the Vizierat. He commanded the people of Malwa and Guzerat likewise to refuse obedience to his edicts, and despatched a considerable armed force to support the proclamation; but he gained nothing by a proceeding as precipitate as it was impolitic and unjust. The Nizam, roused to the highest pitch of indignation, not only instructed his deputies to resist the imperial decree, but let loose upon the disputed provinces the fury of the Mahrattas, who, after a severe struggle, drove out the imperial forces, and remained absolute masters of Guzerat and Malwa. Nor did they long rest satisfied with these acquisitions. Their light columns burst into Agra and Allahabad, several districts belonging to which received the yoke—whilst their plundering excursions extended to the gates of Agra itself, from the suburbs of which they more than once carried off booty.

In the midst of so much weakness and treachery, Saadut Khan, the governor of Oude, stood forth a solitary instance both of loyalty and courage. Though secure himself from the harassing inroads

of the Mahrattas, he assembled an army with great expedition, and, marching into Agra, came unexpectedly upon the freebooters and defeated them with great slaughter. This done, he prepared to push upon Gualior, where the main body, under a chief named Bajeeraow, was said to be encamped; but his progress was suddenly arrested by peremptory orders from Delhi. The new Vizier, a creature of Mahomed's choice, became all at once jealous of the renown which Saadut Khan was acquiring, and peremptorily forbade him to advance a league beyond Agra, till he should join him with his army. Never was a measure devised more ruinous both in its immediate and remote consequences. The Mahrattas, finding that they were not pursued, recovered the confidence which had in some degree forsaken them; and, instead of retreating into the mountains, pressed boldly upon Delhi itself. They reached it, unobserved by the imperialists, plundered the towns and villages near, and set fire to the very suburbs, which they evacuated, without loss, on the approach of the Vizier. They then marched into Malwa; and such was the panic occasioned by the rapidity of their movements, that Mahomed consented to purchase a peace by the payment of chout.

In the mean while the emperor, taught by experience that the enmity of the Nizam was not to be treated with indifference, had effected a reconciliation with that prince, who retained the Deccan, free of all tribute, except an occasional present on the return of stated festivals. He wrote to him in his distress, urging him first to drive the Mahrattas from Malwa, and next, after peace was con-

cluded, to return to Delhi, where the presence of some leader on whom the troops could depend was never, it must be owned, more strongly needed. For the empire of Hindostan, distracted by intestine discord, was likewise threatened from without by a very formidable enemy. We allude to Nadir Shah, otherwise called Thamas Khoolee Khan, one of the most savage conquerors that ever appeared in the East.

It falls not within the province of this history to give any detailed account of the extraordinary rise of that reckless warrior. He was the son of a shepherd of Korassan, who, taking advantage of the confusion incident upon one of those revolutions to which the Persian empire has so often been subject, raised a body of followers by the sale of his father's flocks, and became a robber by profession. This occurred at a moment when the Sophis were chased from the throne of Ispahan by the Afgans; and Nadir, by affording shelter to Thamas, the last of the former line, was enabled to cloak his excesses under the disguise of loyalty. Hence his assumed title of Thamas Khoolee Khan, or Khan the slave of Thamas, and hence the readiness with which he gathered round his standard a force competent to meet with advantage the disciplined and hardy troops of the Afgans.

A great battle was fought which ended in favour of Nadir, who, in 1729, not only recovered Ispahan, but pursued the usurper into Afganistan. Here he succeeded in making his enemy prisoner; after which he repelled the Turks, who had begun, during the declining power of the Sophis, to make large encroachments on the western provinces of

Persia. It was now that the shepherd of Korassan, who had hitherto affected to govern in his master's name, considered himself sufficiently strong to throw aside the mask; he caused the eyes of the unfortunate Thamas to be put out, and proclaimed himself king, by the title of Nadir Shah.

During the progress of the war which Nadir waged in Afganistan, several chiefs of that country found shelter in Hindostan, in spite of repeated protests on Nadir's part addressed to Mahomed Shah. Nadir was little disposed to bear with patience any insult offered to his dignity, and finding that no answer was made to these remonstrances, he began to meditate revenge. With this view he advanced towards the Indus, subduing Kandahar and Cabul by the way, both of which were crowded with fugitive Afgans, against whom he had vowed eternal enmity. These fled before him into Hindostan; yet, strong as his antipathy was, it may be doubted whether he would have followed them thither, but for the occurrence of an accident well calculated to excite the rage of one less irritable than Nadir. It chanced that an ambassador whom he sent forward to Delhi was attacked by the inhabitants of Jellalabad, and with the whole of his escort cut to pieces. Nadir soon became aware of the fact; and, furious with rage, he burst into Lahore at the head of a numerous and well-appointed army.

The fate of Jellalabad may be imagined; it was levelled with the earth, and every living thing found within its walls was put to the sword. In like manner, the rout of the Persian columns might

be everywhere tracked by blazing villages and ruined homesteads; for there was no energy among the provincial governors, nor any armed force kept up competent so much as to retard their progress. At last, however, Mahomed Shah, attended by the Nizam, his vizier, and the chief of the nobility, put himself at the head of all the forces whom he found it practicable to collect. With these he occupied an entrenched camp, at a place called Cornal, about eighty miles to the westward of Delhi, where he was soon joined by the gallant Saadut Khan, an officer in whom he reposed unbounded confidence.

It was unfortunate for the Emperor of Hindostan that the rashness of Saadut Khan brought on a battle ere any plan had been arranged, and in direct opposition to the strenuous advice of the Nizam. It was, on the part of the imperialists, a confused and irregular affair; whereas the Persians, accustomed to act together, and not more brave than obedient, charged in close array, under cover of sufficient support. As a matter of course, victory declared for the latter. Saadut Khan was taken, the vizier mortally wounded, and countless numbers of lesser note slain; whilst the spirit of such as escaped being effectually broken, the idea of further resistance was laid aside. Such was the state of affairs in Mahomed's camp, when a messenger arrived from Nadir with proposals for peace.

The truth was that Nadir, who seems not to have entertained any idea of annexing Hindostan to his empire, readily listened to the pacific counsels of his prisoner, Saadut Khan. That chief,

whose personal views pointed to the vizierat, persuaded the Shah to demand a subsidy of two millions sterling as a compensation for the expenses of the war; and it may well be imagined, that Mahomed, whose apprehensions were excited to the highest, readily and joyfully acceded to the proposal. But the treaty, thus happily begun, was not destined to lead to any adequate result. The Nizam had already extorted from Mahomed a promise of that office, to which the ambition of Saadut Khan aspired; and the latter became, in consequence, the implacable enemy both of his sovereign and his country. It required but little persuasion on his part to impress Nadir Shah with the opinion that two millions were quite inadequate to the sacrifice which he proposed to make. Nadir accordingly requested the Nizam to visit him, through whose means he likewise obtained possession of Mahomed's person, after which he caused his tents to be struck, and advanced upon Delhi.

For the two first days after the entrance of the Persians into the capital of Hindostan, the strictest discipline was maintained, and the strictest order prevailed. Unfortunately, however, a rumour got abroad during the night of the second day, that Nadir himself was slain, and the inhabitants readily believing what they desired to be true, rose tumultuously upon the invaders. A scene of great confusion ensued, during which about a thousand Persians lost their lives; but this slaughter was trifling in comparison with that which began with the return of day-light. Exasperated at the treachery of the people, the Persians no

sooner received the sanction of their chief, than they spread themselves sword in hand over every quarter of the town, and multitudes of all ages and both sexes perished beneath their exterminating attack. The town, likewise, was set on fire in more than one quarter; prodigious quantities of jewels, costly robes, and other property were plundered,—in a word, Delhi endured, for the space of more than twelve hours, all the miseries of a sack. But as it was not the design of Nadir either to destroy the place entirely, or to give up its wealth indiscriminately to his followers, he commanded the plundering, a little before sunset, to cease; and such was the deference paid to his orders, that within a quarter of an hour not a marauder was to be seen.

Nadir remained in Delhi, where he exercised the functions of royalty a space of thirty-seven days, during which he imposed heavy contributions upon all ranks and classes of men. The collection of these was enforced with unrelenting rigour, insomuch that numbers, to escape the torture with which they were threatened, committed suicide; and these barbarous measures produced a treasure which has been estimated to amount in all to the sum of thirty-two millions of our money. But it was not in the loss of their property alone that the miserable Delhians were afflicted. Famine and pestilence added their horrors to other grievances, and the brutal licentiousness of the soldiery knew no bounds. At last, however, it pleased this mighty conqueror to retire from India. After formally reinstating Mahomed on the throne, and addressed phirmans to the Rajahs and Soubahdars

of provinces, in which he required them to pay obedience as heretofore to the house of Timour, he marched back towards the Indus, which became now the boundary between the two empires of Persia and Hindostan.

While these dreadful deeds were in progress, Saadut Khan, the immediate cause of them, died of a cancer in his back; a circumstance which no persons, besides his own immediate dependents, cared to lament. Neither was it of material service to Mahomed, who became henceforth a tool in the hands of the Nizam's creatures, whose eldest son, by name Ghazee ud-deen Khan, was immediately elevated to the rank of Ameer al Omrah, whilst one of his dependents, Kunmir ud-deen Khan, obtained the Vizierat. With respect to the Nizam himself, however, the state of his affairs in Deccan, where Nazir Jung, his son and deputy, had declared himself independent, appeared too perilous to sanction a more protracted absence. He hurried back, overthrew Nazir near Arungabad, and exerted himself strenuously to restore order; in which, after various vicissitudes of fortune and much loss of time,* he eventually succeeded.

Two other events occurred during the reign of Mahomed Shah, of which it will be necessary, in consequence of their connection with our future history, to give some account.

In the upper part of Delhi lies the district or

* We shall have occasion to refer to these matters by and by, when we come to speak of the operations of the English and French in the Carnatic.

province of Rohilcund, which, in the early periods of the Mogul empire, enjoyed, under the appellation of Kullear, very considerable prosperity. It was colonized early in the eighteenth century by the Yesefree Afgan tribe, a race whose political constitution partook in no degree of the democracy which attaches to the Afgans in general; but presented the picture of a federation of petty principalities, somewhat similar in their construction and arrangements to the Highland clans.

It chanced that about the year 1720, two of these Afgan chiefs, by name Bisharut Khan, and Daood Khan, accompanied by a band of their adventurous countrymen, came to Hindostan in quest of military employment. They found it in the service of Madhoo Sah, the Zemindar of Serowly, who maintained by rapine a numerous banditti, and they proved themselves in no respect inferior, in point either of rapacity or daring, to the boldest of their leader's gang. When plundering a village at no great distance from Serowly, Daood Khan captured a youth of the Jaut tribe, whom he converted to Mahomedanism, named Ali Mahomed, and adopted as his heir. Like others of the clan to which he now belonged, Ali bore arms as a volunteer, and after a short time was promoted to the command of a troop of Afgan cavalry in the service of the Vizier. Finally, as he gave proof of great bravery and intelligence, he was recommended to the notice of the Emperor, from whom he obtained a grant of lands, and was put in charge of several districts. He made so much use of his resources during the confusion attendant upon

Nadir Shah's invasion, that he established in Rohilcund a species of independent sovereignty.

Against this man, who now acted as acknowledged chief of the Rohillas, the new Vizier considered it right that an army should be sent; not only for the purpose of enforcing payment of the revenues due from the province, but to remove him altogether from his office. The Rohilla met the invaders, put them to the rout, and slew the individual who had been nominated to succeed him. Yet, strange to say, not only was he left unpunished, but large additions were made to his command. Ali Mahomed, however, became giddy with success. He assumed an attitude so threatening towards the Viceroy of Oude, that the latter earnestly entreated the Emperor to take the field against him in person; and he was forced, after an ineffectual resistance in the open country, to seek refuge in one of his forts. Here he was closely besieged, till the Vizier, interceding for him, he received a free pardon, on condition that he would accept in exchange for Rohilcund the government of Sirhind, a small and barren spot, on the northwest of Delhi. He accordingly removed thither; but remained only till a convenient opportunity offered for returning to his original possessions. Such was the origin of a power which became, before long, sufficiently formidable to give an Emperor to Hindostan, and which ventured to try the fate of war even against the army of England.

In the second year after this expedition into Rohilcund, a new invader entered the western provinces in the person of Ahmud Abdallee, the chief

of the Afgan tribe of Abdal, and the founder of an empire intermediate between Persia and Hindostan. This man, originally a domestic slave in the family of Nadir Shah, rose by dint of his own talents to considerable influence in the army; and being in camp at Meshed, when his master fell a victim to conspiracy, he took at once the high ground of leader of a party. He was followed by many chiefs of his own nation, with whom he marched towards Afganistan, and gaining possession, by great good fortune, of a convoy of treasure, he found no difficulty in prevailing upon the Afgans to acknowledge him as king. Candahar and Cabul submitted one after another; he next penetrated into Lahore, whither he seems to have been invited by the treachery of the governor; and though the traitor, repenting of his crime, offered some resistance, Lahore was added, in the end, to Abdallee's dominions. But the alarm now spreading, and Delhi itself being declared in danger, the Vizier, accompanied by the prince Ahmed, the Emperor's eldest son, marched out to meet him. The two armies, having spent some time in manœuvring, which enabled the Afgans to plunder the heavy baggage of their enemies, came at last to action not far from the town of Serhind. The result was little satisfactory to either party; for the Vizier being killed by a cannon shot, a large portion of his followers took to flight, while a magazine accidentally exploding in the Afgan lines, much confusion arose, and many valuable lives were sacrificed. The Afgans, however, retreated, and the young prince was by no means disposed to molest them by too close a pursuit.

This was the last occurrence of any moment which took place whilst Mahomed Shah swayed the sceptre, for he died soon after intelligence of his son's victory reached him, in the 30th year of his reign, and 49th of his age.

The new emperor, Ahmed Shah, instead of fulfilling the high expectations which his conduct in Lahore excited, gave himself up, from the hour of his accession, to a course of low debauchery. He offered the Vizierat first to the Nizam, by whom it was declined, and afterwards to Suffder Jung, the Viceroy of Oude, a chief whose personal ambition, joined to a total absence of discretion, involved the empire in many serious calamities. It is to be observed, that during the confusion incident upon the invasion of the Abdallees, Mahomed Ali, escaping from Sirhind, had re-established his authority over the Rohilla clans. How far he conducted himself with moderation in his recovered dignity, we are not informed; but his death, which happened soon afterwards, presented a temptation to the Vizier which he knew not how to resist. He determined to conquer Rohilcund, exposed, as he understood it to be, by the weakness of a minority; and he employed for the purpose Kaim Jung, the head of the Bungush tribe of Afgans, and Nabob of Ferokabad. That chief, risking a battle with the Rohillas on unfavourable ground, was defeated and slain; and it very soon appeared that the Vizier, in arraying the combatants one against the other, was animated by a feeling of the purest selfishness; for he immediately marched a force into the territories of his late ally, laid siege to the capital, and reduced it. But his

treachery went not long unpunished. The brother of Kaim Khan, joining his arms to those of the Rohillas, overthrew the usurper in a great battle. He then took by storm the city of Allahabad, blockaded Lucknow, and compelled Suffder Jung not only to retreat from place to place, but, in the end, to seek shelter at Delhi. There was little of vigour there to aid him in his reverses, so he called in the assistance of the Mahrattas. They came with great readiness, but after driving the Afgans to their mountains, they showed no disposition to withdraw. The result was, that the Vizier, overmatched at his own weapons, was compelled to confer upon his new allies several valuable settlements; whilst, in order to check their farther encroachments, he replaced the Bungush tribe in Ferokabad, and granted peace on easy terms to the Rohillas.

Whilst these things were going on in one part of the disorganized and decaying empire, the Rajpoots of Ajmere took forcible possession of certain valuable districts, to which, as it was alleged, they could advance no legitimate title. A feeble effort was made to expel them; but it ended in the discomfiture of the imperialists, who were defeated, and driven with disgrace from the province. Almost at the same time, Ahmed Abdallee, having recruited his army in Cabul, passed the Indus, and cnce more appeared in Lahore. Meer Munnoo, the eldest son of the Vizier, who commanded on that frontier, offered considerable resistance to the invaders, but some of his ablest officers being slain, and his troops becoming dispirited, he was in the end forced to submit, and to accept the government of

Mooltan and Lahore under the conqueror. Nor did the evil end there. Abdallee, not satisfied with the actual possession of these provinces, sent messengers to demand from the emperor their formal resignation; and such was the imbecility of Ahmed, that though he had summoned the Vizier to court for the express purpose of employing him against the Afgans, he was nevertheless persuaded by a worthless eunuch to consent to the dismemberment of the empire.

In the meanwhile Nizam al Mulk, who had returned to the Deccan, died in the 104th year of his age; and was succeeded without any opposition by his second son, Nazir Jung. Nazir did not long survive his father; upon which Ghazee ad Dien Khan, the elder of the Nizam's sons, who held the rank of Ameer al Omrah at the court of Delhi, solicited, and obtained permission to seize the vacant government. He marched for this purpose as far as Arungabad, followed by a numerous army of Mahrattas; but falling sick there, he expired, and his disorderly bands instantly dispersed.* Ghazee ad Dien Khan had a son, by name Shaab ad Dien, a youth of singular audacity and considerable talent, who succeeded, chiefly through the interest of the Vizier, Suffder Jung, to his father's title and office of Ameer al Omrah. But gratitude is a virtue for which we may usually look in vain among either the princes or the subjects of eastern states; and the new

* The affairs of the Deccan are so involved with the history of the struggles between the English and French, that we must defer our notice of them to that portion of our work which details the fortunes of these rival powers in India.

Ameer al Omrah proved no exception to this almost universal rule. The first use which he made of power was to enter into plots against his benefactor, and the Vizier found himself, by the intrigues of his former protegé, excluded from the imperial presence. The Vizier saw that his ruin was decreed, and though exceedingly unwilling to raise the standard of revolt, he determined to look to his own safety. He entreated permission to return to Oude, but the request being negatived, he withdrew with arms in his hands. He had not proceeded far ere information was conveyed to him that the emperor was preparing to intercept his retreat; upon which he called to his assistance a Jaut Raja, whose friendship he had secured in former days. Thus reinforced, he waited not to receive the attack; but countermarching on the instant, set up a rival to the imperial throne, and compelled Ahmed, with his new favourite, to take refuge in the castle of Delhi. A siege, which lasted six entire months, followed, at the end of which both parties became weary of the contest, and the pretender to the Musnud being freely sacrificed, Suffder, though he resigned the vizierat, was confirmed in his government of Oude and Allahabad.

The whole power of the government, that is to say, as much of power as yet attached to the imperial name, was now vested in the young Ghazee ad Dien; who lost no time in conducting an expedition into the country of the Jauts. He associated with himself on this occasion a Mahratta general named Holkar Mulhar; and the Jauts, unable to keep the field, retired to their

strong holds. Before one of these Ghazee ad Dien sat down; but being deficient in battering cannon, he commanded, rather than besought the emperor to forward the royal train from Delhi. Ahmed, whose jealousy of the Ameer al Omrah was already great, became exceedingly indignant at the tone of this message, and readily listened to a proposal made by the Jaut Raja for the destruction of his minister. Ghazee ad Dien, however, obtaining a knowledge of the conspiracy, devised the means of defeating it, and caused the evils intended against himself to recoil upon his enemies. The emperor was surprised in his camp by Holkar, when proceeding with a slender escort to join his new ally, and though he escaped to the capital in disguise, he found no shelter there against the fury of Ghazee ad Dien. That aspiring Omra hastened to invest himself with the office of Vizier. He seized both Ahmed Shah and his mother, put out their eyes, and cast them into prison; after which he proclaimed Yezzez ad Dien, son of the late Jehaunder Shah, emperor, by the title of Aulumgeer the Second.

The Mogul empire was now reduced to the lowest state of decay, when every viceroy and petty chief considered himself entitled to regulate his own province as he chose. Mooltan and Lahore were formally separated from it—the Mahrattas were in actual possession of a large portion of it—the Deccan had become, to all intents and purposes, an independent state, and the Europeans were fast rising into power. It was at this crisis that the Vizier, encouraged by the death of Meer Munnoo, drew upon his country the renewed

scourge of an Abdallee invasion, by a base and futile attempt to recover from the widow of that chief the district of which Munnoo had been governor. There was an engagement subsisting, by which the daughter of Meer Munnoo had been promised to Ghazee ad Dien in marriage; and Ghazee ad Dien considered the present a favourable opportunity for desiring its fulfilment. The widow cheerfully assented; but the treacherous Vizier, taking advantage of his mother-in-law's misplaced confidence, despatched a force which seized her and her treasures, and conveyed them to Delhi. The injured woman threatened him with the vengeance of her sovereign — and no great while elapsed ere the denunciation was fulfilled. Ahmed Shah Abdallee no sooner became acquainted with the insult which had been put upon his representative, than he led an army of Afgans across the Indus, and clearing Lahore of the feeble garrisons established by Ghazee ad Dien, arrived in due time at Delhi. That city was once more subjected to the most cruel exactions; neither sex nor condition was spared; and several families which had been so fortunate as to escape the rapacity of Nadir Shah, were now involved in one common ruin. Nor was the insatiable Afgan contented with the plunder of the capital. He commanded Ghazee ad Dien, who had of late assumed the style of Umad al Mulk, to levy heavy contributions on the Dooab; whilst he himself penetrated into the country of the Jauts, and ravaged to the very gates of Agra. A pestilence, however, breaking out in his camp, he was obliged to raise the siege of that place which he had begun, and after entrusting the

care of the Mogul's person to a Rohilla chief called Nujeeb ad Dowlah, he quitted Hindostan.

Naturally weak, and ignorant where to turn for support, Alumgeer gladly received into his service the individual to whose protection his conqueror had recommended him. He promoted him without delay to the rank of Ameer al Omrah; but the Vizier, impatient of a rival in the administration of public affairs, made haste to annul the appointment. Attaching to his interests the Bungush chief of Ferokabad, whose father had lost his life in a struggle with the Rohillas, and calling in the powerful assistance of a Mahratta army under Ragonaut Raow and Holkar, Umad al Mulk marched with hasty strides upon Delhi. The Emperor and Nujeeb ad Dowlah shut the gates; but, after a siege of forty-five days, the former was obliged to submit; whilst the latter, purchasing a safe passage through the Mahratta lines, escaped to Rohilcund. Umad al Mulk, however, was not content to have the person of the Emperor only in his power. He commanded him to call to the presence his eldest son, the prince Alee Gohur, who, at the head of a small body of horse, maintained himself near Delhi, and when the latter refused to enter the citadel, he was by the Vizier's directions besieged in his palace. Alee Gohur, however, putting himself at the head of a few followers, cut his way through the besiegers, and fled to Nujeeb ad Dowlah, with whom he sojourned some time; but he was driven, before long, to seek shelter at the court of the Soubahdar of Oude, and found it at last among the English at Bengal.

The Viceroyalty of Oude was at this time held

by Sujah ad Dowlah, the son of that vizier whom Ghazee ad Dien had supplanted, and it was not to be expected that much cordiality should subsist between him and the present arbitrator of the Emperor's fate. It is true that as yet no acts of hostility had been committed on either side, but the protection afforded to the fugitive prince served as a sufficient excuse, in the Vizier's eyes, to organize an attack upon the territories of his rival. We have shown elsewhere that Suffder Jung, to serve his own purposes, first led the Mahrattas across the Ganges; and they were too much satisfied with the possessions acquired in Rohilcund, not to desire an extension of them. The Vizier, therefore, found no difficulty in directing two of their chiefs, Junkojee and Duttal Sindia, against Nujeeb ad Dowlah, whom it was his object to crush entirely previous to any attempt upon Oude. But the Nabob,* aware that their cause was common, hastened to the Rohillas' assistance, and drove the Mahrattas, with prodigious slaughter, across the Jumna. This was a severe blow upon Ghazee ad Dien, but it came not alone, for, while he yet lamented it, information arrived that Abdallee Shah was in full march to support the Rohillas. Nor was this all. It was discovered that Alumgeer kept up a constant correspondence with those whom the Vizier chose to consider as enemies of the state, and that toils were gradually weaving against himself, from which it would be no easy

* The titles Soubahdar and Nabob, though originally very different in their signification, came to be used latterly as synonimous terms. He of Oude was almost always called the Nabob.

matter to escape. Ghazee ad Dien formed his resolution, and without one compunctious struggle carried it into effect. He caused his ill-fated sovereign to be murdered; and finding that even from the Mahrattas support was no longer to be obtained, he retired into the Jaut districts, to a castle furnished by his old ally, Sooraje Mul.

From this time forth, the great struggle for the empire of Hindostan was between the Mahrattas on the one hand, and the Afgan followers of the Abdallees on the other. The former, notwithstanding their defeat, soon collected a second army, sufficiently numerous to bring the Rohillas and the Nabob to terms; after which, they made themselves masters of Delhi, pushed a strong force to the westward, and overran Sirhind, Mooltan, and Lahore. During the following season they extended their conquests as far as the banks of the Attok, and again turned their faces, with recruited strength, towards Rohilcund and Oude. It is true that a pageant of Mogul sovereignty was still kept up in the person of Alee Gohur, who proclaimed himself emperor by the title of Shah Aulum the Second; but he was a fugitive among strangers, destitute of a party, and incapable of exercising even the most trifling act of authority. Had not, therefore, the power of Ahmed Shah counterballanced that of the Mahrattas, the latter would have doubtless rendered themselves lords of India, of a very large portion of which, even as matters stood, they remained in possession till subdued by the armies of England.

The Mahrattas, a predatory and lawless race, exercised extreme cruelties upon all classes of the

people, by whom, whether Hindoos or Mussulmans, they were cordially abhorred. Information, therefore, no sooner arrived that the Abdallees were in motion, than a strong party was formed to assist them. The consequence was that Ahmed Shah's army received daily additions to its strength, whilst the Mahrattas were harassed and annoyed by continual attacks upon their detachments, and reduced to extreme distress by the removal of every species of supply. They evacuated the western provinces without striking a blow, and, falling back on their reserves, halted in front of Delhi, with the intention of risking a general action in defence of that city. In the meanwhile Nujeeb ad Dowlah, with many other Rohilla chiefs, flocked to the camp of Ahmed, who pressed forward with great spirit towards Delhi. A desperate battle ensued, in which the Mahrattas sustained a signal defeat, rendered doubly distressing by the death of their general Duttah Sindia—and a second victory being gained over Holkar, in the vicinity of Secundra, they were driven entirely across the Nerbudda.

Not yet, however, were the Mahrattas reconciled to the idea of relinquishing the great object of their ambition, the empire of Hindostan. The news of these disasters no sooner reached them, than Suddasheo Rhow, or, as it is generally pronounced, Bhaow, nephew to the Peshwa Ballajee, with many other chiefs of the highest rank, exerted themselves strenuously to raise a second army, and such was the zeal which still animated the people at large, that men flocked from all quarters to their standard. A countless host was

by this means brought together, which, besides 140,000 cavalry and a numerous artillery, could boast of several battalions of Sepoys, disciplined after the European fashion; and the whole, with the return of the dry season, took the road to Delhi. They were joined on their march by Sooraje Mul the Jaut, and his friend the Vizier Umad al Mulk; and they reached the capital of Hindostan without meeting opposition.

Ahmed Shah, after his great victory, had crossed the Jumna that he might winter in a province less devastated than that in which the capital stood. The city itself, therefore, offered no resistance to the Mahrattas, but the palace was not reduced till after a sharp contest, which lasted during several days. Fearful excesses were now committed in a place which had already experienced its full share of the miseries of war; for not even the tombs of the saints were preserved from the plunder of these sacrilegious marauders. But the time of vengeance was at hand. Ahmed Shah, finding the Jumna still unfordable, swam the torrent at the head of his adventurous warriors; and the Mahrattas became so alarmed, that, though thrice the numbers of their enemies, they retreated to Panniput. Here they entrenched themselves, and were kept for several days in a state of close siege, till famine and pestilence began to do the work of the sword, and they were reduced to the last extremity. Skirmishes, moreover, daily occurred, in all of which the Mahrattas were worsted; indeed, a portion of their camp itself was stormed and won, though it was afterwards evacuated. " The chiefs now held a consultation and agreed, that as by

remaining within their entrenchments they must perish with disease and hunger, it were better to hazard a battle, and, if defeated, flee to the Deccan. They marched out of their camp, and advanced, with their artillery in front, towards the army of the Shah, who was prepared for their reception, and permitted them to move a considerable distance from their works. At length the Afgans rushed upon them with such fury as not to give them time to use their cannon. Little resistance was made, as the Baow was killed almost in the onset, which had an immediate effect upon his troops, who fell into confusion. Junko, and many other chiefs of note fell, and the rout became general. Ibraham Khan Gardee, with his Sepoys, made some stand, but were overpowered and cut to pieces. The field floated with the blood of the numerous slain. Two and twenty thousand men and women were taken prisoners, and the plunder of the Mahratta camp exceeded all valuation. A great train of artillery, fifty thousand horses, two hundred thousand cattle, several thousand camels, and five hundred elephants, formed a part of this capture. But this was not all the loss of the enemy; for those who had escaped from the field were mostly put to death in the villages, where they had hoped to find refuge, and of the chiefs of rank only three, among whom was Holkar Mulhar, found their way to the Deccan."*

Ahmed Shah made no other use of this splendid victory than to march to Delhi, where he spent several months in quiet. He then acknowledged

* Scott's History of the Successors of Arungzebe.

Shah Aulum as emperor of Hindostan, commanded Sujah ad Dowlah, with the other chiefs, to submit to his authority, and assigning to Nujeeb ad Dowlah the care of protecting the royal family and preserving the peace of the capital, he nominated the prince Jewan Bukht regent till his father should return. This done he departed for Cabul, with the avowed determination of interfering no more in Indian politics.

It was stated some time ago that the prince Alee Gohur, the eldest son of Alumgeer, fled to Bengal, in order to avoid the fury of the Vizier Ghazee ad Dien. He continued there, dependent upon the bounty of the English, till the revolutions just described had taken place, when he proclaimed himself emperor, and was acknowledged by his allies under the appellation of Shah Aulum the Second. It would have been well for him had he followed the advice of his new friends, and remained contented with the liberal allowance which was granted to him by the Company; but the desire, not in his case unnatural, of recovering possession of the palace of his ancestors, overcame every consideration of prudence. He accordingly set out at the head of a small force, and being joined by Sujah ad Dowlah, on whom he had bestowed the office of Vizier, penetrated into Allahabad, and wrested the district of Bundlecund from the Mahrattas. Here, however, he was forced to abide during full ten years, in consequence of the disordered state of the country, and his own want of resources; nor could all his endeavours prevail upon the English to espouse

his cause, or carry him, as they might easily have done, to Delhi.

Whilst the emperor thus lingered in an obscure province, over which, and over which alone, his authority extended, Nujeeb ad Dowlah, to whom the defence of the capital had been entrusted, was conducting himself with great probity and vigour. After resisting an attack of the Jauts, who besieged him in Delhi, for forty-two days, he deemed it prudent to purchase peace at the expense of some concessions; but they were not of such a nature as to embarrass his own government, or materially to affect the interests of the Imperial family. The case was somewhat different when the care of the royal household devolved, at his decease, upon his son, Zabtah Khan. That chief, though he preserved order in public, scrupled not, in defiance of every dictate of honour and decency, to debauch the women belonging to the emperor's harem; thus loading his master with the severest disgrace which can be imposed upon a native of Asia. It was a crime which Shah Aulum could not forgive; and to his endeavours to avenge it, may, perhaps, in some degree be attributed the calamities which eventually befel both him and his children.

Shah Aulum growing weary of his retirement in Allahabad, and finding after repeated applications that he could not obtain the assistance of the English, determined, rather than forego the satisfaction of reigning at Delhi, to throw himself upon the protection of the Mahrattas. He had accumulated during his exile a considerable treasure, and he employed a large portion of it in hiring

the army of Scindia, which led him, without difficulty, and in great pomp to Delhi. But his sojourn there was brief. Anxious to chastise Zabtah Khan, he took the field at the end of twenty days, and, passing the Ganges in spite of a feeble opposition, drove his enemy from every defensible post. A large portion of Rohilcund fell by this means into his power, whilst Zabtah Khan himself fled for refuge to the camp of the vizier, who had taken arms in order to save his own district from the insults of the Mahrattas.

So far the affairs of Shah Aulum appeared to prosper; but the instruments of which he made use in subduing the late governor of Delhi, were by no means worthy to be trusted. With the perfidy belonging to their nation, the Mahrattas not only set up a claim to the greatest share of the country conquered, but refused to give up even a moderate portion of the plunder; demonstrating likewise, by their general manner, that they used the emperor as a mere tool in their own hands. He was too weak to resent this treatment, and he did not dare to complain; he returned to Delhi less satisfied with the issue of his campaign, than if victory had declared against him.

Shah Aulum had expended most of his ready money in the prosecution of this war; and his allies were not of a temper to continue faithful any longer than might be conducive to their own interests. They began, therefore, before long to intrigue with his enemies, to whom they gave back, for a stipulated price, all the conquests so lately won. They treated the sovereign also with great indignity, insulting his governors, plundering his

provinces, and outraging all the laws of decency; after which they marched to their own country: leaving him at the mercy of his unpaid and mutinous followers. Nor did the evil end there. Being secretly invited back by a worthless minister, they formed an alliance with Zabtah Khan and the Jauts, and marched towards the capital with the declared intention of seizing the emperor's person, and placing a garrison in the citadel.

There was an Omrah at court during these perilous times, by name Nujeef Khan, who had eminently distinguished himself in the military operations against Zabtah. This man the emperor had of late neglected, bestowing his countenance chiefly upon an eunuch, Husham ad Dowlah, upon the very traitor, indeed, who, the more effectually to humble his rival, had brought the Mahrattas against his country. To Nujeef Khan, Shah Aulum turned in his distress; and that gallant warrior, heading the few troops that remained faithful, threw himself into a strong position which covered the city. But though he and his band performed prodigies of valour, the weight of superior numbers bore them down, and the Mahrattas burst with their usual impetuosity into Delhi. This was but the commencement of a long series of degradations to which Shah Aulum was compelled to submit. They caused him to descend from his throne, in token that the power of deposition was in their hands, and permitted him to reascend it in the presence of their chiefs, in order to satisfy him that thenceforth he must govern for their benefit. They compelled him, likewise, to confer on Zabtah Khan the rank of Ameer al Omrah; and formally to restore to

him all the districts of which but a few months previously he had, by their assistance, been deprived. Then, after reinstating the Jauts in all their ancient possessions, annexing the fertile tract between the Ganges and Jumna to their own dominions, and plundering Delhi, they left Shah Aulum the mere shadow of a crown, and departed.

It was not the least grievous of the personal indignities imposed upon the emperor, that he had been compelled to dismiss Nujeef Khan from his service, under circumstances which left him no other alternative than to enter that of Holkar. But as yet Nujeef was not at heart a traitor. He continued with the Mahratta army only till an opportunity offered of passing over to that of the vizier, by whom he was again sent back to Delhi, and reinstated in more than his former authority.

It is probable that the insults to which he had been subjected rankled in the breast of Nujeef Khan; at least, his behaviour from this time forth was, towards the emperor, both insolent and domineering. He gave his best assistance, it is true, in the attempts made to crush Zabtah Khan, and to oppose the Mahrattas; whilst he chastised the Jauts, recovered Agra, and performed other important services. But of the substantial benefits arising from them, himself, and himself alone, reaped the harvest. From the period of his return to office, till the day of his death, Shah Aulum remained under his controul; a pensioner on his bounty, which was sometimes so niggardly that the very women belonging to the harem were without the necessaries of life. The sole act of royalty, indeed, which the unhappy emperor was per-

mitted to perform, consisted in the conferring of empty titles, and the ratification of the acts of his minister. Yet the death of Nujeef Khan, which occurred in 1782, served but to pave the way for even greater calamities. The Nabobs of almost all the provinces took arms; and civil war raged from one end of Hindostan to the other. Next came the Mahrattas, who swept before them all opposition, till they, in their turn, were checked by the Rajpoots; whilst the emperor, equally incapable of acting with decision as of controlling the violence of faction, became a puppet in the hands of each party as it proved victorious. But there arose at last an adventurer who gave a new turn to the face of affairs, abusing, in a manner too horrible for narration, the success with which fortune favoured him.

Zabtah Khan, the inveterate personal enemy of Shah Aulum, died, and left behind him a son, Gholaum Kaudir Khan, the heir of his father's animosity towards the ill-fated emperor of Hindostan. This chieftain, taking advantage of the distracted state of public affairs, marched suddenly to Delhi at the head of an army of Rohillas, and putting the feeble Mahratta garrison which Scindia had left there to flight, entered, and possessed himself of the royal person. At first, he seems to have used his power after a fashion not dissimilar to that in which others had used it; that is to say, he caused himself to be invested with the highest offices, and waged war, in the Emperor's name, against all who desired his degradation. But the brutality which formed a principal ingredient in his character, after exercising itself prin-

cipally on less dignified subjects, was at last let loose on Shah Aulum and his family. It chanced that on one occasion a division of his army sustained a defeat from Sindia, who, had he pushed upon Delhi with ordinary vigour, must have made himself master of the place. This, however, the Mahratta neglected to do, and Gholaum Kaudir Khan hurrying to prevent the error from being remedied, found, to his surprise and indignation, the gates closed against him. After repeatedly summoning the city, he resolved to attempt an entrance by force; the attempt was perfectly successful, for the garrison, at once feeble and treacherous, offered no resistance, and Shah Aulum fell without the loss of a man, once more into his hands. But the Rohilla knew not what it was to treat a captive monarch with respect. Shah Aulum was deposed, and committed with his women and near relatives to close confinement; whilst one of his sons was raised to the throne, by the title of Bedar Shaw.

We will not shock the feelings of our readers by describing at length the wanton cruelties in which this barbarian indulged. Let it suffice to state that, after demolishing the fine old carved work in the palace, appropriating the jewels, and melting down the plate, men, women and children, attached to the household, were beaten and tortured, in order to force from them a disclosure of the spot where the Emperor's treasures were concealed; while food was kept from them till multitudes absolutely perished by the most horrible of all deaths, that of inanition. There is in Scott's History of Arungzebe's Successors, a journal given

of the proceedings, day by day, of this monster, during six weeks which he devoted to the torture of the Imperial family. We make from it the following short extract, as a specimen of the refinement in cruelty which he exhibited.

"August 10. Gholaum Kaudir, attended by five Rohillas, went to Shah Aulum and demanded a discovery of his hidden treasures. The unfortunate Shah replied, 'I have none; take what you can find in the fort.' The villain then ordered his attendants to lift up the Princes Meerza Solymam, Akber Shah, and others, and dash them on the ground; which they did. Shah Aulum, in the agony of his grief, exclaimed, 'Traitor, forbear such cruelty on my children in my sight.' Upon this, Gholaum Kaudir made the Rohillas cast him on the ground; after which, they sat upon his breast, and stabbed out his eyes with a dagger. He then gave orders for the like cruelty to be inflicted on the Princes, but was prevented by the entreaties of an officer, named Sectludass. The palace resounded with lamentations among the ladies of the harem."

In this manner Gholaum Kaudir conducted himself, till the Mahrattas arriving, and threatening to assault the place, he was compelled to retreat. He endeavoured to make his way to his own country, but was intercepted and driven within the walls of Mhirta. To the honour of the Mahrattas be it recorded, that, though he offered the most favourable terms, they steadily refused to enter with him into any capitulation. The fort was stormed; it withstood the assault; but all hope of protracted resistance being vain, he fled alone the same night,

on a swift horse; leaving the garrison to their fate. Fortune, however, declared against him. His horse stumbled and fell; he was so bruised that he could not mount again, and, being taken in this plight, he suffered the punishment which his crimes deserved. He was literally hewed to pieces, and expired whilst his tormentors were carrying him, a mutilated trunk, to be cast at the feet of his unfortunate sovereign.

Having executed this severe, but just judgment, upon the barbarous Rohilla chief, the Mahrattas took possession of his country, and made themselves masters of the little portion of Hindostan which still owned the immediate sway of the Emperor. With respect to the Emperor himself, he was restored, blind as he was, to the throne; and a nominal allegiance offered to him by the Soubahdars of all the provinces: but he became, as might have been expected, a mere pageant in the hands of those to whom he owed his worthless elevation, and by whose bounty he lived. It is not necessary to describe the purposes to which they directed their influence. We shall have occasion to allude to this part of our subject by and bye, when we come to treat of the progress of that mighty power in which all the native principalities have become absorbed; but it may be well if we endeavour to convey to the minds of our readers, in the mean while, some general notion of the machinery by which, during five centuries, the internal affairs of the Mahomedan empire in India were administered.

CHAPTER IX.

System of Government under the Mahomedans.

THERE are three distinct epochs in the history of the Mahomedans in India, at each of which their proceedings towards the invaded people may be said to have borne a character peculiar to itself. The first of these embraces that space when the tide of war was in early progress, and the hardy soldiers of the faith fighting for plunder rather than for sovereignty, aimed not so much at the subjection, as at the extermination of their enemies. It is unnecessary to say more of this stage in their career, than that it presents few features different from those usually exhibited under similar circumstances. Mahmood, with his immediate successors, obeying the impulse of blind zeal, rather than animated by a manly ambition, made no effort either to conciliate the natives, or to introduce among them any determinate system of government. They overthrew armies, stormed and sacked towns, levied heavy contributions upon the people, and levelled temples with the earth; but they left the internal administration of affairs to be regulated as might seem best to the Rajahs, whom they either condemned to the payment of permanent tribute, or permitted, for a fixed sum, to resume the functions of royalty. The case is different when



we arrive at that period in Indian story which placed a prince of the house of Ghoory on the throne, and subjected a large portion of Hindostan Proper to a Mussulman ruler. Then it was that a system which had been some time in progress, attained as it were, to form, though it acquired not the order and consistency of which it could eventually boast, till the accession of the chivalrous and accomplished Akbar, the son of Humayoon.

It seems now to be admitted on all hands, that the changes introduced by the Mahomedans into the internal arrangements of Hindostan, were neither so numerous nor so important as might have been anticipated. At first, indeed, it is evident enough that they entertained the design, not only of reducing their new subjects under the yoke of the Koran in temporal matters, but of abolishing idolatry, and substituting the faith of the Prophet in its room. But though for the most part they found it an easy matter to disperse the soldiers of the Rajahs, and reduce their principalities, the Mahomedans were eventually taught, that to root out, at least by violence, from among any people, prejudices long entertained and fondly cherished, is a task too gigantic for human accomplishment. The Hindoos perished by multitudes, both in the field and in cold blood; their priests endured torture, and their chiefs degradation; but the number of converts thus effected to the tenets of Islamism, were few indeed. By degrees, therefore, the attempt to bring the two races into one was laid aside. A capitation tax, sanctioned by the Koran, was imposed upon the Hindoos, as the price of their blood, and the conquerors and the conquered, though inhabiting the

same country, remained, as they do at this day, totally distinct peoples.

A state of things so anomalous was scarcely to be avoided in a country where insurmountable obstacles to intermarriages, and family connections were interposed between one man and another. Equally abhorring all religions except their own, and exercising few of the usages of social life in common, the Hindoo was as little likely to seek a wife from the family of a Mussulman, as the Mussulman was inclined of his own accord to propose the alliance. Such things did, indeed, from time to time, occur. Motives of interest* or individual attachment would occasionally prove too strong for other influences; and when the latter were fairly set aside, conversions from the one faith to the other speedily followed. But generally speaking, the strangers, though settling as colonists in the land, carefully abstained from mixing their blood with that of the natives; who, on their part, were not less desirous to shun such supposed contamination. The consequence was, that even in point of local situation, the Hindoos and Mussulmans kept as far as might be apart. The latter, congregating in towns, and devoting their talents to mercantile pursuits, left the care of agriculture for the most part† to the former, who conducted

* Some of the Mahomedan Emperors, and many of the chiefs, intermarried into the families of the Rajahs of Ajmere and Rajhastan.

† This was not always the case. There are agricultural districts in India almost wholly peopled by Mussulmans, as well as numerous villages, where the professors of the rival creeds dwell together; but wherever the last mentioned arrangement holds good, the victors are invariably found to have adopted the habits and the customs of the vanquished.

matters after the fashion which had become familiar to them by the example of their ancestors and the custom of ages.

We have said, that into the established usages of India, its Mahomedan conquerors introduced fewer and less important innovations than might have been expected. This remark applies equally to matters of revenue as of police, for in direct contradiction to the statements of the earlier travellers, it is now admitted on all hands that a claim to a proprietary right in the soil of his dominions was at no period set up by the Mogul. To such a claim, indeed, the terms of his own law stood directly opposed; nor is there a single authority worthy of weight which will now be found to advocate an opposite opinion. Thus we find it stated, by Abool Hussan Ahmud Ben Mahomed, a distinguished writer of the fourth century, that "on entering a strange land, the Mahomedans are bound to invite the inhabitants to adopt their creed. If they consent, war shall not be waged with them; if they refuse, they shall be compelled to pay kheraj, (a tax imposed upon infidels,) and on agreeing to do so, they shall be treated as Mahomedans." Again, another Mahomedan doctor writes,* "the land of Irak is the property of its inhabitants. They may alienate it by sale, and dispose of it as they please; for when the Imam conquers a country by force of arms, if he permit the inhabitants to remain on it, imposing the kheraj on their lands and the juzeea on their heads, the land is the property of its inhabitants;

* Saraugoob Vahany, as quoted by Briggs.

and since it is their property, it is lawful for them to sell it and dispose of it as they choose." Again, in the celebrated law treatise, called the Hedaya, we are informed, that "Whosoever cultivates waste lands does thereby acquire the property of them," "and that a *Zimminy* (a conquered infidel) becomes proprietor of them in the same way as a Mussulman." In perfect agreement with these enactments are the details communicated by Ferishta, who reprobates one of the emperors (Alla-ood-Deen) because "he became so rapacious that he seized the private property of individuals, and confiscated the estates, both of Mahomedans and Hindoos, without distinction;" whilst Timour in his Institutes commands that "All *deserted* lands, if there *be no owner* to them, shall be annexed to the fisc, (crown lands,) and if there be owners, and those owners are reduced to distress, let the necessary supplies be granted to them, that they may cultivate their lands." We could quote many other sentences from eastern writers, all of them confirmative of our statement; but these will suffice to prove that, except over the wastes, and that only while they remained unfruitful, the Moguls never claimed any other right than had been asserted by the deposed Rajahs.

In like manner it is a great mistake to suppose that the Mussulmans ever attempted to introduce among such of their subjects as professed the Hindoo faith the laws, civil or criminal, to which themselves owed obedience. It is true that in the capitals both of the empire and the provinces, as well as in all large towns, Mussulman judges and magistrates were established, by whom the precepts

of the Koran, and of the statutes derived from the Koran, were ostensibly enforced. It is equally true that no other law besides that of the Prophet either was or could be formally recognized by a government which professed to rule by divine commission. But if practice, not theory, be considered—if we look to the state of things as they subsisted, not in a few detached spots, but generally throughout the country—it will be found that neither the laws nor the language of the Persians were ever employed in the administration of justice in India, till we, in a moment of well-intentioned error, proclaimed them. The following statement of facts, to which a glance at a map will afford ample confirmation, must, we conceive, carry conviction on this head to every impartial mind.

It has been stated elsewhere, that though the sovereignty of the Mogul was generally acknowledged throughout Hindostan, there existed in all ages populous and extensive tracks within which his authority could hardly be said to have secured more than a nominal supremacy. The Rajpoot states, comprehending no inconsiderable portion of Ajmere, the hill people of Delhi, the Nepaulese, the inhabitants of the mountains and jungles, &c. &c., appear to have been governed to the last by their native princes,* though they were so far comprehended within the limits of the empire, that

* Bernier informs us that when he visited the court of Arungzebe there were upwards of one hundred Rajahs dispersed through the empire, who owed but a nominal allegiance to the Mogul; and that of these sixteen or seventeen were possessed of extensive territories, and large resources both in men and money.

the Rajahs paid tribute, and joined the emperor with their troops. Now it requires no lengthened argument to point out, that wherever such a state of things existed, the laws of the Koran must have been absolutely unknown; indeed, the sole law recognized in these tributary kingdoms, for the regulation both of revenue and judicial matters, was that of which we have already spoken—namely, the law of immemorial custom.

Again, there were other districts, even more extensive, which having been thoroughly subdued, were nevertheless restored to the management of their native princes. In some instances these chiefs retained the style and title of Rajah, which, though tributaries and vassals, they transmitted to their sons; in others they became mere administrators, in the name of the Mogul, of the principalities over which their ancestors had reigned. Yet in both cases, as the chiefs themselves were not professors of Mahomedanism, it were absurd to suppose that they dispensed justice among their people by laws of which they were themselves ignorant, or introduced among them customs repugnant to prejudices in which the ruler, not less than the subject, largely partook. We are, therefore, justified in concluding, that in every portion of India, the administration of which continued in the hands of a Hindoo, all matters of revenue, police, and judicature were conducted after the ancient Hindoo fashion; in other words, by the heads of villages, the public registers, the hereditary watchmen, and the punchayets.

We come now to a fourth portion of the empire—that is, to those provinces the general manage-

ment of which was assigned to Mahomedan nobles; and, strange as it may at first sight appear, we find that even here the laws of the Koran exerted very little influence. In all revenue matters, as well as in all civil disputes, provided the latter involved a question between one Hindoo and another, it scarcely ever occurred that the law of the Koran was appealed to; nay it does not appear that even in criminal cases which affected not the life of the parties accused, the Mahomedan governor, or his legal representative, was ever consulted. Whence all this arose will best be explained by shortly describing, through its various gradations, the order of Mahomedan polity.

Our readers are doubtless aware, that the empire of the Moguls was divided into Soubahs, or viceroyalties, which again were subdivided into lesser departments, called respectively Zemindarries, or Pergunnahs, Talooks, and villages. The Soubahs comprehended such tracks of country as the Deccan, Bengal, Oude, &c. Among the lesser divisions may be specified districts of the extent of Burdwan, Dinagepoor, Jessore, and Bangulpore. In like manner Ajmere was considered as a Soubah, though the Rajpoots afforded but an equivocal obedience to the Mogul—whilst several of its departments, such as Shekawittee, Khotee, Bhoondee, &c., may be enumerated under the general appellation of Zemindarries. It is worthy of remark that, ostensibly at least, the machinery of government assigned to each of these was a perfect copy or epitome of that employed for the regulation of the affairs of the empire at large. What the emperor was to the empire the Soubah-

dar was to his Soubah, and the Rajah, Zemindar, Poligar, or lesser chief, to his division—the responsibility rising from one to the other, till it reached the palace at Delhi itself. In the eyes of an European all this might seem to present but a succession of tyrannies; yet there is the best ground for asserting that, though grievous abuses did occasionally occur, and the people were at all times liable to suffer, they enjoyed, during the vigour of the Mogul government, no inconsiderable share of personal liberty and protection.

Looking now to the condition of one of these Soubahdarries we find that it was only, as has been already said, at the provincial capital, and in the larger towns, where, for the most part, the Mahomedans fixed themselves, that the laws of the Koran, or the officers recognized by these laws, exerted any sensible influence. There indeed sat the Foujdar to inflict punishment on offenders against the public peace, and there too sat the Cazee to hear and determine suits between man and man. The Cutwal with his officers preserved order. District collectors levied the duties chargeable on goods imported and exported, and generally speaking, affairs went on almost as they did at Delhi; but in the lesser towns, and still more in country places, men were as ignorant of the usages of the Moslems as if the latter had never passed the Indus. We cannot place this matter in a clearer light than has been done by Colonel Briggs in his able work on the land tax of India; and hence, though not disposed to adopt in every particular that ingenious author's opinions, we gladly tranfer the following passage from his pages to our own.

"It has been already shown," says he, "that each Hindoo village had its distinct municipality, and that over a certain number of villages, or district, was an hereditary chief and accountant, both possessing great local influence and authority, and certain territorial domains or estates. The Mahomedans early saw the policy of not disturbing an institution so complete, and they availed themselves of the local influence of these officers to reconcile their subjects to their rule. In the long contest of the Hindoo Rajahs against the Mahomedans, it seems likely that the former had levied the fourth of the crop from all their subjects, to which by law they were entitled—and it is probable that in their necessities they might even have exacted more. We have no account of the mode the Mahomedans adopted to raise supplies, but we may conclude from what we have seen in later times that without going into detail they assessed whole districts at a certain sum, and required the Des Adekars, whom they subsequently entitled Zemindars, to levy the amount from the respective villages or towns under their charge. From the existence of these local Hindoo chiefs at the end of six centuries, in all countries conquered by the Mahomedans, it is fair to conclude that they were cherished and maintained with great attention as the key-stone of their civil government. While the administration of the police, and the collection of the revenues, were left in the hands of these local chiefs, every part of the new territory was retained under military occupation by an officer of rank, and a considerable body of Mahomedan soldiers. So gradual and systematic

was the extension of the Moslem power, that the soldiers of Delhi only first passed the Vendhayan mountains to penetrate to the south in the year 1294, and it was not till three years later that Guzerat eventually became a Mahomedan province. Having once crossed the Vendhayan range, their conquests spread so widely, that the Mahomedan authority extended, in 1347, over India as far south as the Krishna river; and thirteen independent Mahomedan kings, besides six minor principalities, occupied the whole region. In examining the details of Mahomedan history, which has been minute in recording the rise and progress of all these kingdoms, we no where discover any attempt to alter the system originally adopted. The ministers, the nobles, and the military chiefs, all bear Mahomedan names and titles, but no account is given of the Hindoo institutions being subverted, or Mahomedan officers being employed in the minor details of the civil administration."

It would appear from this that the Moslems, so far from imposing their own laws upon their subjects, treated the customs of the latter with the utmost respect; and that they did so because experience taught them that their own interests were advanced by a line of policy so prudent.

Nor is it difficult to account for this. In eastern countries generally, and in India not less than elsewhere, the chief attention of the supreme government is given to the realisation of the revenue; a matter to which all others, whether they affect the interests or lives of the subject, are made absolutely subservient. The consequence is, that every institution, both of judicature and police,

took its colouring under the Moguls, from the connection which it held with fiscal arrangements; in other words, the administrator of fiscal affairs, whatever the extent of his district might be, was invested with extensive powers both as a magistrate and a judge. The Soubahdar, for example, whilst he commanded the troops in his own province, and represented in all other particulars the person of his master, was held responsible for the exact payment into the imperial treasury of the taxes imposed upon him, having under him, in his turn, a succession of minor chiefs, each of whom united in his own person the duties of collector, magistrate, and judge. These were the Zemindars, whose authority extended over Pergunnahs differing in magnitude according to circumstances, some of them presiding over five villages, some over fifty, some over a hundred, and some over a still greater number. In almost all instances, however, the Zemindars were Hindoos; who stood towards their several districts in a light precisely similar to that in which the Potail,* or head man, stood towards his particular village. They received, likewise, as a compensation for their labours, the same species of remuneration which was bestowed upon the Potail; they were permitted to deduct a portion of the government dues, amounting, as the best authorities state, to one tenth part of the whole. Again, the Zemindars were assisted in the details of their duty by a machinery in every important particular analogous to that employed in regulating the affairs

* We use the term employed in the south of India, because we have used it on a former occasion.

of a single village. What the Curnum was to the Potail, the Canongoe was to the Zemindar; namely, a public notary and accountant; whilst his Paiks and Peons enabled the Zemindar to preserve the peace in his district at large exactly as the Talliars and Toties kept the peace in particular villages. All these institutions, however, and they were universally prevalent under the Mogul, were of Hindoo origin. The name, indeed, was in some instances new; but the office and the law, according to which its duties were discharged, continued to be, to the strictest letter, what they had ever been. No greater mistake, therefore, was ever entertained, than that the Mahomedans introduced any important innovations into the order of Hindoo society. A few changes might here and there take place; indeed, it is scarcely possible that men, whose habits are different, should meet familiarly and often, without mutually communicating or receiving some new impressions from one another; but viewing the subject on a large scale, it may with perfect truth be asserted, that the whole duration of the Mahomedan sway produced no changes worthy of notice in the customs, laws, and usages of India.

The origin of all those mistakes, which have arisen touching the condition of property under the Moguls, may be traced back, in a great measure, to the absence of hereditary titles of nobility, which is certainly not peculiar to India. Thus the Omrahs who surrounded the throne, not less than the Soubahdars and Viceroys of provinces, as they owed their elevation entirely to the will of the sovereign, so they left nothing, except the memory

of their greatness, to their sons. These, therefore, unless personally favoured, might, at the decease of their parents, return to the very lowest station in social life. In like manner the grants made to favourites, such as Jagheers, for the support of their dignity, though mistaken by Europeans for distinct transfers of land, gave a property to the recipient in nothing more than the revenue due from certain districts to the state. It was the land-tax, not the land itself, which was conveyed; and as the land-tax was the property not of the individual emperor, but of the state for ever, the gift necessarily reverted to the giver at the decease of the Jagheerdar. But the property in the soil itself, as it was not interfered with by such grant, never passed out of the hands of its rightful owner the Ryet. " Crown lands," says Sir Thomas Munro, " according to the English acceptation of the term, are unknown in India. The most powerful monarchs had none; neither Akbar nor Arungzebe had any; and the despotism of the sovereign was itself the very cause of there being none, because by giving him unlimited controul over all land throughout the empire, it rendered the aid of any private domain altogether unnecessary. A small part of the public revenue arose from customs; the rest, about nine-tenths, from the land revenue or tax. All land was assessed to the public revenue; a part of the land was allotted to religious and charitable purposes, and to municipal institutions, and the public revenue of such lands was enjoyed by the incumbents. But the public revenue of all other land came to the royal treasury, unless when assignments of particular

villages or districts were made to civil and military officers for their personal allowances and the pay of their respective establishments; all which assignments, however varied, ceased at the will of the sovereign. As there was no public body, no class of nobles or clergy which had any right to interfere in the settlement of the land-tax; as this power was vested in the sovereign alone, and as he could raise and lower the tax as he saw proper; and as the whole produce was at his disposal, it is manifest that he could derive no advantage, and therefore have no motive for holding as private possessions of the crown any lands apart from the general mass of the Sirkar, or government lands of the empire; and it is also evident that whenever he granted land rent-free, he granted the public revenue." All this is strictly true with reference to mere Jagheers, but with respect to the Nancar, or allowance granted to the Zemindars, that, as well as the office, became, by insensible degrees, hereditary in the families which enjoyed it. It is true that each Zemindar was furnished with a sunnud, and that at the beginning he was, like every other officer under the crown, considered removable at pleasure; but the tendency to convey office from father to son which exists among the Hindoos, produced in this, as in other instances, its usual effect. The Zemindars, like the Potails, became, in course of time, an hereditary class of revenue officers.

Such was the condition of affairs while the Mogul empire continued in its vigour; each province being governed by one officer appointed for the purpose, and parcelled out into lesser divisions,

over which his representatives presided. These were severally controlled and assisted in revenue affairs by the Gomvitahs, Canongoes, and Dewans, whilst at the capital itself was the Court of the Sudder Dewanny, or chief minister of finance under the crown. The ancient system of taxation, moreover, was adhered to with undeviating tenacity. Except a few trifling taxes on salt, opium, &c., the revenues were derived wholly from the soil, either by agreements entered into from year to year with the heads of villages, by annual valuation, or by measurement. So it was in civil and criminal matters. The Soubahdar, content to observe his Rajahs and Zemindars, and to repress among them every disposition to rebellion, left them to settle disputes and to dispense justice among their people according to immemorial usage. Nor is it to be supposed that there existed a single department in the state to which the Hindoo, equally with the Mussulman, was not admissible. Akbar raised Hindoos of family to the highest command in his armies, and placed a Hindoo Viceroy in Guzerat, without seeking by any means, direct or indirect, to interfere with the habits, religious or civil, of his servant.

The events recorded in the preceding pages will show that this happy state of things continued only so long as the reins of supreme government were held by a vigorous hand. The emperor no sooner began to exhibit signs of weakness, than his viceroys hastened to avail themselves of it, and introducing numerous changes into the nature of the connection which subsisted between them and

their master, paved the way for those commotions and disturbances of which the detail has been given. Now it was, that instead of accounting regularly for the revenues collected in their respective provinces, they contracted with the Mogul for the payment of a certain sum in money, and scrupled not to enter into similar agreements with the Zemindars and officers under them. A custom was thus introduced of farming the public revenues. The Potail hired them from the Zemindar, the Zemindar from the Soubahdar, and the Soubahdar from the Mogul; and hence every rupee that each was enabled to realize beyond the rent agreed upon, became clear profit to himself. As a necessary consequence, the unfortunate cultivator suffered; and the very men who ought to have protected him became his oppressors.

Any attempt to describe particularly the state of society in India from the period when this abominable system began, were, within the limits of a work like this, perfectly fruitless. Let it suffice to state, that all the laws, both of usage and justice, were violated; that rapine and misrule soon overspread the land; and that men, driven from their villages and their homes, were reduced to seek in robbery that subsistence which honest industry no longer promised to afford. It is not surprising that, amid the confusion of such times, the traces of original order became obscure, or that persons succeeding, as our countrymen did, suddenly and unexpectedly to sovereign power, should have committed numerous errors through their extreme anxiety to bring about a contrary result.

CHAPTER X.

Intercourse with Europe during the Middle Ages—Discovery of the passage by the Cape—Its consequences to India, Portugal, and Venice.

WHILE the sovereignty of Hindostan thus passed from one foreigner to another, or became divided among a multitude of lesser usurpers, the productions of the country, both natural and manufactured, continued to be held in high estimation by the nations of the west. Neither dangers nor difficulties were permitted to put a final stop to the commercial intercourse which had so long subsisted between the two hemispheres. When the new lords of Egypt, by closing the port of Alexandria, took away the usual means of communication through the trading towns in the Mediterranean—other, though more intricate channels were sought out in order that the great cities of Europe might still receive a supply of those commodities which long usage had taught them to regard not as luxuries, but as necessaries. The silks of China were now purchased at Chensi, the westernmost province of the celestial empire; whence they were conveyed in a caravan, by a march of eighty or a hundred days, to the banks of the Oxus. Here they were embarked in vessels which bore them to the Caspian, across which they passed, not without risk, and then ascending

the river Cyrus, as far as it was navigable, they were transported over land by a five days' carriage, to the Phasis. From the Phasis again they passed to the Black Sea, into which the Phasis falls, while from the Black Sea itself they were conveyed, by an easy and well known course, to Constantinople. In like manner the commodities obtained from Hindostan pursued a route, abundantly inconvenient, though, doubtless less tedious and operose than this. They were carried from the banks of the Indus on the backs of camels, either to the Oxus, or directly to the Caspian, whence they passed, like the Chinese silks, without danger or difficulty, to Constantinople.

It is very obvious, that articles of slender bulk and considerable value could alone repay the expense incident upon such a mode of transport; and that in regulating the prices these of articles, not only the expense, but the hazards attending their conveyance, would of necessity be taken into account. For in their journey across the vast plain, extending from Samarcand to the frontier of China, caravans were exposed to the assaults and depredations of the Tartars, the Huns, the Turks, and other roving tribes which infest the north-east of Asia, and which have always considered the merchant and traveller as their prey; nor were they exempt from insult and pillage in their journey from the Cyrus to the Phasis, through the kingdom of Colchis, a country noted, both in ancient and modern times, for the thievish disposition of its inhabitants.* Nevertheless the trade with the

* Dr. Robertson.

East was carried on, despite of all these disadvantages, with singular perseverance and ardour. Constantinople became in consequence a great mart of Indian and Chinese productions, and the wealth which flowed into it not only added to the splendour of the city, but retarded, for a time, the decline of the empire of which it was the capital.

Two petty republics of Italy, Amalphi and Venice, were the first to interfere with this lucrative monopoly. The Venetians, in particular, after elevating their country to the rank of an independent commonwealth, applied their utmost energies to the prosecution of commercial adventures, and succeeded before long, in drawing to their own shores some portion of the profits which had hitherto enriched the Greek merchants. Nor was the example thus set, neglected by the people of Marseilles, and the other towns of France situated on the Mediterranean. In the face of many and imminent dangers, these enterprising mariners once more steered their course to the harbours of Egypt and Syria—where the Caliphs, made sensible of the advantages to be derived from a free intercourse even with Christians, began gradually to sanction a commerce to which they had formerly stood opposed. But at the moment when trade was beginning thus to revive, and the European nations were receiving through the old channels all the luxuries of the East, circumstances occurred, which, for the second time closed these channels effectually against them. We allude now to the crusades, or expeditions for the recovery of the Holy Land, which, during two centuries, gave full occupation to the professors of the rival creeds,

and contributed to alienate them more than even from one another.

It was during the fourth of these expeditions in the year 1204, that a series of political intrigues, of which it is unnecessary to give here any account, turned the arms of the champions of the cross, against the Greek Emperor. The capital was stormed and taken by the confederates, who, though they advanced an Earl of Flanders to the throne of the Constantines, conferred upon the Venetians a grant of much more importance. These aspiring republicans being rewarded with a portion of the Peloponnesus, at that time the seat of flourishing manufactures, especially of silk, soon made themselves masters of several of the largest and best cultivated islands of the Archipelago; and established a chain of settlements, partly military, partly commercial, which extended from the Adriatic to the Bosphorus. By means, partly of these, partly of the instrumentality of such of their fellow citizens as preferred a residence in Constantinople itself, they obtained, before long, an absolute monopoly of the Eastern trade; of that portion of it, at least, which we have already described as carried on by way of the Euxine. It does not appear that the Venetians abused their commercial fortune more grossly than such advantages are apt to be abused; nevertheless, their increasing wealth soon raised up enemies, not less daring or unscrupulous than themselves, who, in due time, broke in with great effect upon their monopoly.

The Venetians had enjoyed their superiority about fifty-seven years, when the Greeks weary of a fo-

reign yoke, rose in rebellion, and being assisted by the Genoese, succeeded after a brief struggle in expelling the Latin emperor from their city. In recompense for their signal services on that occasion, the new sovereign bestowed upon his Italian allies, Pera, the chief suburb of Constantinople; besides granting them such exemptions for the accustomed duties on goods imported or exported, as gave them a decided superiority over every competitor in trade. The Genoese were not backward in availing themselves of the favourable position in which they stood. They surrounded Pera with fortifications, they rendered their factories on the opposite coast, places of strength, and they became more completely than the Greeks themselves, masters of the harbour of Constantinople; the whole trade of the Black Sea indeed passed into their hands; whilst in order to secure that which would have found its way by other channels from the East, they took possession of part of the Crimea, and rendered Caffa its principal town, their emporium.

In the mean while the Venetians, shut out from one channel of direct communication with India, were not deterred by the remembrance of past dangers, from endeavouring to secure another. They ventured, in spite of the animosities which the Holy Wars had excited, to revisit Alexandria; and finding that the Soldans of the Mamelukes, though they imposed heavy duties, were not averse to a renewal of traffic, they cheerfully paid the former that they might obtain the advantages arising from the latter. Thus the commerce of the East may be said to have been almost equally

shared during a period of a century and a half, between the rival republics; for if we except a feeble and short attempt on the part of the Florentines to participate in the trade of Egypt, no efforts were made all this while by any other European power to break down this two-fold monopoly either by sea or land.

In this state affairs continued, the lighter and more portable productions finding their way to Constantinople, the more bulky, but not less coveted goods passing from Alexandria to Venice, till the year 1453, when Mahomed II. carrying the Greek capital by assault, involved both natives and foreigners in one common ruin. The Genoese, driven from Pera, and their settlements on the adjacent coast, made a brave effort to maintain themselves in Caffa; but the power of Mahomed was too gigantic, and in 1474, the Crimea was likewise abandoned. Now then were the Venetians enabled once more to regulate at pleasure, the terms at which Europe generally should be supplied with Oriental luxuries. Constantinople was no longer a mart open to the nations of the West; and with the exclusive privileges granted to the Venetians by the Mameluke sovereign of Egypt and Syria, there was not a power in Christendom competent to interfere. The Genoese, formerly their rivals, had fallen so low as to become alternately the subjects of the Dukes of Milan and the Kings of France. The French, still smarting under the effects of the English conquests, were destitute alike of power and inclination to cultivate with activity the arts of peace. England, devastated by the wars of the two roses, lay inert

and feeble, like an over-wrought champion. Spain was as yet divided into several kingdoms, her most fertile provinces being still in possession of the Moors; and even Portugal, though already entered upon her career of discovery, had not yet made such progress as to be entitled to a high rank among the commercial nations. Thus the Venetians, almost without rival or competitor, except some of the inferior Italian states, were left at liberty to concert and to execute their mercantile plans; and the trade with the cities of the Hanseatic League, which united the North and the South of Europe, and which had hitherto been common to all the Italians, was now engrossed in great measure by them alone.

The admiration or envy with which the other nations of Europe beheld the power and wealth of Venice, led them naturally to inquire into the causes of this pre-eminence; and it was generally determined that among them all its lucrative commerce with the East was by far the most considerable. A thousand schemes were in consequence devised with the view of destroying, or gaining a share in a commerce so profitable; but, though these were pursued with increasing vigour, according as the resources of each state supplied the means, many years elapsed ere they led to any important result. That, however, which even Columbus had failed to effect, and in seeking to effect which he discovered a new world, was at length brought about by the persevering industry of a Portuguese gentleman. Vasco de Gama, a man of rare talents and courage, succeeded in doubling

the Cape of Good Hope, on the 20th of November, 1497. He directed his course towards the north-east, touching at many ports on the coast of Africa, till after a variety of adventures, which the Portuguese describe with unqualified but just pride, he came to anchor in the harbour of Milinda. It chanced that several vessels from India were assembled in this harbour at the time. From among the crews of these he procured a pilot, under whose guidance, he pushed boldly across the Indian Sea, and on the 22d of May, 1498, arrived not less to his astonishment than delight, at Calicut, on the coast of Malabar.

It falls not in with the plan of our present history, to describe at length the consequences which accrued both to Portugal and to India, from this fortunate voyage. We must content ourselves, therefore, with stating, that Gama, though at first well received by the Indian monarch, was eventually so harassed, through the jealousy of certain Moorish traders, that, after incurring numerous dangers, he was glad to escape to his own country. He brought back with him, however, accounts so favourable of the fertility and opulence of the Indian States, that the Portuguese government lost no time in fitting out a second expedition; which, to the amount of thirteen ships, conveying not fewer than 1200 soldiers, set sail from Lisbon, under the orders of Pedro Alvarez Cabral.* Cabral arrived at Calicut, on the 13th September, 1500. He sent on shore, certain na-

* It was while prosecuting this voyage that Cabral discovered Brazil.

tives, whom Gama, though he received them as hostages, had transported to Europe, and professed great anxiety to enter with the king into a treaty of friendship and commerce. But as if preternaturally forewarned of the evils which were about to befall his country, the Zamorin (for so he is designated by historians) rejected all his advances. No great while elapsed, moreover, ere the suspicions thus mutually entertained, led to acts of open violence. A factory which the Europeans had established in the city was attacked, its inmates, with the exception of twenty individuals were slain, and the Portuguese fleet, after cannonading the town, and destroying such shipping as lay within reach, weighed anchor in search of a more friendly roadstead. This they found at Cochin, a petty kingdom, at that time tributary to the Sovereign of Calicut; but being threatened by a powerful squadron from the latter place, the admiral was well satisfied to avoid a contest. Having laden his vessels with the most costly spices, and touched both at Cananoor and Milinda, Cabral returned to Lisbon, July 1, 1501.

Meanwhile, the King of Portugal, without waiting for the return of Cabral, had despatched a third expedition under the command of Juan de Nueva, which, consisting of four vessels, with four hundred men on board, steered direct for Calicut. By great good fortune, however, the admiral found at San Blas, on the coast of Africa, whither he repaired for refreshment, a letter from Cabral, hidden in an old shoe, which informed him of the unfriendly disposition manifested by the Zamorin. He immediately gave directions that his squadron

should rendezvous, not at Calicut, but at Cochin; where, he was scarcely arrived, ere he found himself engaged in open hostilities with the neighbouring people. A severe naval action was fought, in which, with little loss to themselves, the Portuguese proved victorious, after which, the King of Calicut was fain to offer an apology for past offences, and tender his friendship and protection for the future.

The arrival of Cabral, in the Tagus, excited, as may well be imagined, a powerful sensation throughout Portugal. A fourth fleet was soon equipped, consisting of twenty vessels, of which the chief command was given to Vasco de Gama; who, touching at Mosambique and Quiloa, on the African coast, steered first for Cananoor, and afterwards for Calicut. Here he defeated the navy of the Zamorin, in a great battle, in revenge for an attempt on the part of that prince to cut him off; whilst the latter marching an army of fifty thousand men into the territories of the Rajah of Cochin, burnt his capital, and compelled him to take refuge in an island. But at a moment when the affairs of their ally seemed reduced to the lowest ebb, the unexpected appearance on the coast of three fresh squadrons from Europe, gave new courage both to the fugitive Rajah and to the Portuguese. The squadrons in question, were commanded by Alphonso de Albuquerque, the illustrious founder of the Portuguese empire in the East; and they contained a body of troops sufficiently numerous, to sanction his entering upon a career, which his aspiring and sagacious mind had from the first contemplated.

It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader, that at the period of which we are now treating, the power of the Pope to confer upon his subject princes all or any portion of the Globe, inhabited by Heathen tribes, was no where disputed throughout Christendom. In the true spirit of the times, Portugal had taken care to procure a bull, by which the sovereignty of such places as her mariners might discover beyond the limits of Cape Non, was secured to her; but though the abstract right of the Supreme Pontiff to make this award was not likely to be disputed, it seemed highly improbable that the commercial nations of Europe would long pay to its terms at least a voluntary obedience. Albuquerque accordingly determined to secure, by other and more effectual means, an absolute superiority throughout all the Indian seas. With this view, after defeating the Zamorin, and reducing him to a state of dependence upon the crown of Cochin, he set sail for Goa, the position of which, not less than its importance, pointed it out as a desirable settlement for his countrymen. Without assigning any reason for the movement, he landed his troops upon the island, attacked and carried the city by assault, and set about the erection of works which might enable him to keep the prize thus treacherously won. But the sovereign of the Deccan, one of whose predecessors had wrested the place from the Rajah of Bejanugger only forty years previously, attacked him with a large force, while his fortifications were yet incomplete, and compelled him, after a siege of twenty days, to evacuate the place. Albuquerque, however, was not the man to relinquish a favourite

scheme merely because it proved more difficult of accomplishment than he had anticipated. In the course of the same year he collected a second army, of fifteen hundred men, again assaulted the city, and again took it; and erecting a strong fort for its protection, rendered it, what it has ever since continued, the capital of the Portuguese possessions in the east.

Animated by the success which attended this first essay, Albuquerque turned his views to the acquisition of other, and not less important stations. He took by assault, after an obstinate defence, Malacca, a commercial city of great importance, and the key of the Eastern Archipelago. Here he built a fort, and planted a garrison; after which, he reduced the Molucca and Banda Islands, the chief sources from which the clove and nutmeg, the most coveted of all the Oriental commodities, were derived. But, among all his conquests, there was not, perhaps, one which reflected greater honour upon himself, or held out a richer promise of benefit to his country, than the reduction of Ormuz, the chief seat of Persian commerce, and one of the most flourishing cities in the East. After twice failing, he appeared before it in February, 1514, with a force so formidable, that all hope of effective resistance was laid aside, and the Portuguese were admitted, without striking a blow, to take military occupation of it.

By exertions such as these, for which they were indebted mainly to the genius of one man, was the empire of the Portuguese in India raised, within the short space of twenty-four years, to the greatest height to which it ever attained. From the Cape

of Good Hope to the Chinese frontier, an extent of twelve thousand miles of coast, all the principal emporia were in their possession. On the African shore, they held Sofala, Mosambique, and Munbasa; in Arabia, Muscat; in Persia, Ormuz; on the Malabar coast, Damaun, Deu, Goa, Cochin, Coulan, and many other stations; on the coast of Coromandel, Meliapoor, St. Thomas, Madras, and Masulipatam; in the Eastern Seas, Malacca, Macao, Timor, and the Spice Islands. Nor was their influence acknowledged only at the different ports over which they exercised supreme authority;—in every region of the East they were received with respect. Wherever their merchants appeared, they carried on trade without rivalry or controul. They generally prescribed to the natives the terms of their mutual intercourse, and as they not unfrequently set what price they pleased on the goods which they purchased, they were enabled to import from Hindostan, and the regions beyond it, whatever was useful, rare, or agreeable, in greater abundance and variety than had before been known in Europe.

It was not to be expected that the Venetians would view with indifference the progress of a power which threatened to remove from them that lucrative commerce, on which the artificial greatness of their country in a great degree depended. They hastened to alarm the fears of the Egyptian Soldan, to whom they represented that the Portuguese were unjustly encroaching upon his rights, and they easily persuaded him to assume a hostile attitude towards the detested interlopers. His first

measure was formally to acquaint the Pope, that if he failed instantly to recall the Portuguese, and to close by his ban the passage round the Cape, every Christian in Syria would be put to death; the churches burned, and the Holy Sepulchre itself destroyed. This threat, however, which a few centuries before would have excited the utmost alarm throughout Europe, was received with so much coldness, that the wily Republicans made haste to suggest another and a bolder step. They incited the Soldan to equip a fleet in the Red Sea, and to attack these daring invaders of a gainful monopoly, of which he and his predecessors had long enjoyed undisturbed possession. But though the fleet was built of materials supplied chiefly from the forests of Dalmatia, and though a body of Mamelukes manned it, the result was not favourable either to the Soldan or his friends. The Egyptian squadron was defeated in several severe conflicts, the ships were sunk, and numbers of the Mamelukes slain; after which the Portuguese remained for some time undisputed masters of the navigation of the Indian Seas.

No change was in this respect produced by the revolution which threw the sovereignty of Egypt into the hands of the Turks. They, indeed, not less readily than their predecessors, entered into the wishes of the Venetians, to whom they confirmed all their ancient privileges; but neither the permission of a free entry into all the harbours of the Turkish empire to goods conveyed direct from Alexandria, nor the imposition of heavy duties upon such as were brought from Lisbon, tended in any

considerable degree to stem the torrent. The Portuguese continued, in spite of every opposition, to be the great medium of intercourse between Europe and the East,—whilst the humiliation of Venice, which took place soon afterwards, left them more decidedly than ever without a competitor.



CHAPTER XI.

Early efforts of the English to share in the Indian Trade—Opposed by the Portuguese—the Dutch more successful—Formation of the First East India Company—its Proceedings and Domestic Difficulties—Rise of Rival Associations—their Union.

The Portuguese had been in the enjoyment of this profitable commerce little short of a century, ere England made any decided attempt to interrupt or obtain a share in it. This is the more remarkable, that for some time previous to Vasco de Gama's expedition, an active spirit of enterprise had arisen in the country; which was excited to fresh and more hazardous undertakings by intelligence of that illustrious navigator's success. So early, indeed, as the year 1497, Cabot, with a small squadron, had explored the coast of America, from Labrador to Virginia. The merchants of Bristol soon afterwards opened a traffic with the Canary Isles, the merchants of Plymouth sent ships continually to the coasts of Guinea and Brazil; fishing vessels were despatched to the Banks of Newfoundland for cod, and to Spitzbergen for whale-oil; whilst the trade with Russia was engrossed, that with the Mediterranean actively prosecuted, and so close an intercourse established with Germany and the central parts of Europe, as to create serious

jealousy among the traders of the Hans Towns. Yet the people who could thus penetrate into so many and such distant parts of the world, abstained, with a degree of moderation not to be accounted for, from engaging in any direct traffic with the East, though it was the branch of commerce in which, like the other nations of Europe, they were above measure anxious to obtain a share.

The great motive which swayed our countrymen on this occasion was one which is not likely, under similar circumstances, to operate again; they imagined that the Portuguese, because they had discovered the route by the Cape of Good Hope, were exclusively entitled to make use of it. Instead, therefore, of following in the track of Gama and Albuquerque, their adventurous spirits applied themselves to the discovery of some new and equally direct line of communication between the coasts of Europe and of India. A merchant, named Robert Thorne, who had resided for some years at Seville, in Spain, where he acquired a particular knowledge of the intercourse which Portugal had opened with the East, was the first to assert the practicability of a North-west passage. This he did in the year 1527, when Henry VIII. filled the throne; but though two attempts were made during this, and not fewer than six in the succeeding reigns, they all, like those of more recent date, failed of success. A similar issue attended the efforts of Sir Hugh Willoughby to pass into Asia by the North-east. A storm caught his little squadron when doubling Cape North, which separated the two vessels that composed it; driving the one upon a barren coast, where the

crew, with the commander, perished, and the other into the harbour of Archangel, where it found shelter. Yet the idea was not abandoned till the year 1580, when a second expedition having been fitted out, and entirely failing in its object, all hope of penetrating through the Frozen seas was for a time relinquished.

In the midst of so many disappointments the spirit of the nation was kept alive by the accomplishment of two memorable voyages,—the first conducted by Francis Drake, the son of a poor clergyman in Kent; the second by Thomas Cavendish, a gentleman of family and distinction. Drake, who had previously distinguished himself as a skilful and adventurous navigator, obtained in 1577 a commission from Queen Elizabeth, and sailed from Plymouth on the 13th of December, with five ships, manned by 164 seamen. With these he passed the Straits of Magellan, ravaging the western coast of Spanish America as he went along; indeed, the excesses of which he was guilty were so numerous and so glaring, as to inspire him with just apprehensions should he attempt to return by the same route. Under these circumstances he formed the bold resolution to cross the Pacific Ocean, and to regain England by the Cape of Good Hope. Though there remained but one ship out of the squadron which followed him from Plymouth, Drake was not deterred from carrying his determination into force; and escaping all the perils, both of strange seas, and of the enemy, he had the honour, next after Magellan, to circumnavigate the globe.

In the course of this memorable cruise, Drake

touched at several of the Molucca Islands, making his most protracted sojourn at Ternate, where he was received with great hospitality and kindness. He visited Java likewise; the inhabitants of which held with him and his crew much friendly intercourse; and he departed from it with a tolerably accurate knowledge, both of the character of the people and the productions of the country. He then steered for the Cape of Good Hope, which he passed without meeting any of those horrors which the wily Portuguese had represented as attending that navigation; and taking in a few necessary supplies at Sierra Leone, continued his progress towards England. Finally, he arrived in Plymouth on the 26th of September, 1580, after an absence of two years, ten months and twelve days.

It is not easy to describe the degree of excitement produced among all classes of Englishmen by the successful termination of this daring exploit, as well as by the display of the spices, silks, and other costly commodities, which the triumphant seamen exhibited to the view of their countrymen. Drake himself, as is well known, after entertaining the Queen on board of his ship, at Deptford, received the honour of knighthood. His name afterwards became associated in the minds of men in general with all that was gallant and great; and the songs, epigrams, and poems which were addressed to him, appear to have exceeded all calculation. But these were not the sole, nor the most important, consequences which attended this prosperous termination of his exploit. Many other persons, scarcely inferior to himself in the qualifications of

courage and intelligence, were instigated by his example to engage in similar undertakings, till the seas swarmed with English vessels bound every where upon voyages of discovery.

Conspicuous among the navigators of the day was Thomas Cavendish, who sailed from Plymouth on the 21st of July, 1586, in command of three ships. Steering, like his predecessor, through the Straits of Magellan, he sailed along the western coast of America till he attained to very nearly the latitude of 24° North; when, having completed his piratical operations by the capture of a richly laden Spanish merchantman, he commenced his homeward voyage across the Pacific. Cavendish was even more fortunate, both in the discoveries which he effected and in the use to which he turned them, than Drake. He formed an acquaintance with the natives of the Ladrone islands; he trafficked and made some stay among the Philippines; and extensively explored the intricate navigation of the Indian Archipelago. He passed the Moluccas, skirting the important chain of islands which bounds the Indian Archipelago, from the Strait of Malacca to the extremity of Timor, and running through the narrows which separate the two Javas from one another, cast anchor on the south-west side of the greater island, where he traded with the natives, and stipulated for a favourable reception should his visit be renewed. He then directed his course towards the Cape, which he doubled without risk or suffering, and touching at St. Helena to refresh, reached Plymouth on the 9th of September, 1588.

It chanced that, while Cavendish was thus add-

ing to the stock of information already possessed, his rivals in naval glory were largely instrumental in raising to a higher pitch than before the anxiety of their countrymen to engage in the Indian trade. Both Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh were so fortunate as to make prizes of certain Portuguese vessels called Carracks; ships of heavy burden, in which were conveyed to Europe the most costly commodities of the East. These coming in not long after the return of Cavendish, occasioned an absolute frenzy among the merchants of England, who hastened to push adventures by every channel which held out the most remote promise of success. A company was formed, called indifferently the Levant and the Turkey Company, which strove to trade overland from the port of Archangel, and despatched more than one agent to explore the intervening countries, as well as to solicit the favour and protection of the Mogul. But the result of these endeavours proving less profitable than had been anticipated, men began to think more lightly than they were accustomed to do of the imaginary rights of their neighbours; and a publication appearing from the pen of one Stevens, who had sailed with the Portuguese from Lisbon to Goa, the attention of all was immediately turned to the passage by the Cape of Good Hope.

The year 1589 is distinguished in the annals of British India, as that in which the idea of reaching India by the newly-discovered course was first seriously entertained. It was then that "divers merchants" addressed a memorial to the lords of the council, in which they solicited the royal permission to send three ships and as many pinnaces

on a trading voyage, and avowed their determination not to interfere with the rights and privileges of the Portuguese. All that they wanted was the Queen's sanction to pass by way of the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian seas, where they assured her majesty that there were many places open to the enterprise of her loyal subjects. We have no account of the reception which this memorial met. We know only that in 1591 a squadron actually sailed under the orders of Captain Raymond; but disease breaking out among the people, and a severe storm assailing it, the plan proved abortive. Of all that quitted England on this occasion only one officer, Captain James Lancaster, with a few seamen, returned; and the plight in which they regained their native shores was most unenviable.

In the meanwhile the Portuguese, though they added several valuable stations, particularly Bombay, to their Indian empire, were not left without a rival in the trade of the East. The Dutch, after casting off the yoke of Spain, began earnestly to apply themselves to commerce; and as they were prevented by Philip from procuring Oriental productions at Lisbon, they determined to seek for them in India itself. With this view they fitted out a fleet, which, penetrating by the forbidden channel, appeared, to the dismay of the Portuguese, among the Moluccas. Here the sagacious Hollanders were not slow in supplanting their rivals in the Spice trade, whilst they were very little scrupulous in the application of force, as soon as they saw ground to expect that it might be applied advantageously. After a brief, but sharp struggle, the Portuguese were wholly expelled from the

Moluccas; establishments were next formed at Java and Sumatra, and rapid strides were made towards the erection of a new monopoly which threatened to engross all the most valuable commerce of these regions. Nor were the Dutch less careful in providing means for the protection of the trade, than industrious in securing the trade itself. They erected forts at convenient stations, which they filled with soldiers, while their armed fleets swept the bays and channels both of the Chinese and Pacific oceans with a force which even England would have found it a hard matter, at that time, adequately to oppose.

It was no sooner known in London that the Dutch had penetrated beyond the Cape of Good Hope, than the English merchants determined, at all hazards, to keep pace with their rivals. An association was formed in 1599, and a fund raised by subscription, the management of which was entrusted to a committee of fifteen persons; whilst a second application was made, with greater earnestness than before, for the royal sanction upon the Company's proceedings. But Elizabeth, though well-inclined to the measure, was deterred from giving to it her countenance, in consequence of the treaty then pending between England and Spain. She contented therefore herself with referring the memorial to her privy council, which made a favourable report; and in the course of the same year John Mildenhall, a merchant, was sent overland by the route of Constantinople on an embassy to the Great Mogul.

It does not appear that this measure, however well intended, produced any favourable results;

indeed, the obstructions thrown in the way of the ambassador proved such, that he failed in reaching Agra, or obtaining an interview with the Emperor, till the year 1606; but the mercantile spirit of England was not therefore repressed. On the contrary, fresh applications, were made to Elizabeth for that license, without which it was considered hopeless to embark in so gigantic an undertaking; and her own inclinations happening to coincide with the views of the privy council, the boon, so earnestly solicited, was obtained. On the 13th of December, 1600, the petitioners were erected into a corporation, under the title of "Governors and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies." They were vested, by charter, with the power of purchasing lands without any limitation; they were enjoined to commit the direction of their commerce to a governor and twenty-four persons in committee; and the first governor, Sir Thomas Knight, was especially named in the act. Upon the Company, their sons when of age, their apprentices, servants, and factors in India, was conferred, for the space of fifteen years, the privilege of an exclusive trade "into the countries and parts of Asia and Africa, and into and from all the islands, ports, towns, and places of Asia, Africa, and America, or any of them, beyond the Cape of Bona Esperanza or the Straits of Magellan, where any traffic may be used, to and from every of them."

Such were the feeble commencements of a power which now holds sovereign sway over the entire continent of India, with the islands immediately contiguous. Two hundred and fifteen per-

sons, with the Earl of Cumberland at their head, composed the company to which this charter was originally granted, and the capital, with which they prepared to engage in their novel enterprise, amounted barely to £70,000, divided into shares of fifty pounds each. With this they fitted out a fleet consisting of four ships and a pinnace, which they freighted with cloth, lead, tin, cutlery, and glass; and adding to the cargo the value of £28,742 in bullion, they committed the whole to the management of Captain James Lancaster. On the 2d of May, 1601, the squadron sailed from Torbay.

The first port in the Indian seas at which the Company's squadron touched, was Acheen, a chief city in the island of Sumatra, where, delivering letters of recommendation from their own government, with which they had been amply supplied, the adventurers were very favourably received. A treaty of commerce was entered into with the chief of the place, permission was granted for the erection of a factory, and a considerable quantity of pepper having been taken on board, they steered for the Moluccas. In the straits of Malacca, however, they fell in with a Portuguese ship richly laden with spices, which Lancaster immediately attacked; and having, after a short contest, made a prize of her, he loaded his own fleet with her valuable cargo. His good fortune in this respect induced him to alter his course, and to put in at Bantam, in the island of Java. Here he traded for some time on terms which appear to have been sufficiently advantageous, and from this place, after establishing a factory, he spread his sails for Eng-

land. The fleet arrived in September, 1603, with a handsome profit to his owners on the capital embarked in the adventure.

From this date up to the year 1613, not fewer than eight voyages were performed; the whole of which, with the exception of one in 1607, in which the vessels employed were lost, proved eminently prosperous. Strenuous exertions were likewise made to obtain the countenance and support of the native princes; nor could all the opposing influence, both of the Portuguese and the Dutch, hinder these from eventually succeeding. We regret that our limits will not permit us to give of these proceedings even an abridged detail; but the reader who is curious on this head, will find ample gratification in the journals of Captain Hawkins and Sir Thomas Roe; both of whom visited Agra as ambassadors, the former in 1608, the latter in 1614.

In the year 1609 a new charter was granted, by which the privileges already conceded to the Company for a given time were rendered perpetual.* Encouraged not less by this than by the permission afforded by the Mogul to trade freely in all parts of the empire, the English began to extend their views beyond the narrow limits within which they had at first been confined. Instead of restricting themselves to the commerce of the eastern islands, Sumatra, Java, and Amboyna, they turned their attention to the continent of western Asia, with

* No charter was ever granted to the East India Company which had not a saving clause, by which the continuance of their privileges was made to depend upon the absence of all detriment to the general interests of the country.

the view of establishing factories at such points as might appear most commodious. Some time elapsed, however, ere the vigilance of their rivals enabled them to carry this wise intention into force. At Aden and Mocha they were opposed by the Turks, who surprised one of their ships, and made the captain, with seventy of the crew, prisoners. On the coast of India, likewise, the Portuguese stoutly withstood them; nor was it till 1612 that any progress was made towards the attainment of their wishes. In the months of October and November of this year, however, Captain Best, with two English ships, having sustained several successful actions at Swally roads against a very superior force of Portuguese, made so deep an impression upon the authorities at Surat, that they ceased any longer to be guided by the insinuations of the defeated party. The consequence was, that the object of a phirman, which had been received so early as the 11th of January preceding, was immediately carried into effect; and the English were permitted to erect factories at Surat, Ahmedabad, Cambaya, and Goja.

From this time forth for the space of almost a century, the history of the East India Company presents little besides a series of commercial difficulties, originating partly in the misconduct of their own servants, partly in the opposition of their numerous and active rivals. At home the peculiar privileges granted to the body were from time to time assailed, as well by the mercantile portion of the community in general, as by hostile corporations. Thus independently of frequent individual efforts to establish an intercourse with India, we

find in 1635, an association formed, which had for its object, the destruction of the Company's monopoly, and of which Sir William Courtin was at the head. So ably were the intrigues of this new society pushed forward, that Charles the First seems for a time to have been completely gained over; whilst its commercial transactions were conducted with such prudence and zeal, that the affairs of the old Company became seriously deranged. Again, when the dangers apprehended from this quarter were beginning to subside, other, and not less serious difficulties succeeded them; first, in consequence of the proceedings of the king when raising forces for the prosecution of the Civil War, and afterwards, from the abolition of all exclusive rights under Cromwell. But Cromwell, though he tried the experiment of a free trade to the East, did not persist in it beyond a space of five years. On the contrary, he took the interests of the Company, after the year 1657, in an especial manner under the protection of his government; and strove, not without success, to infuse fresh vigour into its general proceedings.

The death of the usurper would have been a severe blow upon the Company, had they not found both in Charles the Second, and his successor, friends not less partial than they had latterly found in Cromwell. By the former a new charter was granted, bearing date the 3d of April, 1661, in which, not only were the ancient privileges of the Company confirmed, but extensive additional powers were conceded to them. Their local agents were now authorized to make peace and war with any prince or people, not being Christians; to

build forts and to maintain armies; and to seize and send home as prisoners, all Englishmen whom they should find unprotected by a license within their limits. These, with the right of administering justice, elevated the Company at once to the rank of a sovereign state; though as yet, their territories comprehended nothing more than a few stations along the coast, and islands of the Indian Sea.

Under the protection thus afforded, and it was even more extensively afforded by James than by Charles, the prosperity of the Company began to revive, and their enterprises, though still productive of less profit than they cared to avow, became daily more and more extended. In them the government did not hesitate from time to time to participate. Several large sums of money were advanced as loans to the state; whilst men in power, whether privy-councillors or members of the House of Commons, were heavily paid for their good offices. Nevertheless the Company was not yet destined to stand free from the devices of a rival. At the moment when King William avowed himself friendly to their monopoly, and renewed to them the privileges granted by his predecessors, a new association was formed—which, applying directly to Parliament, obtained from it a charter of free trade with the East. Thus were two corporate bodies created, one recognised as the London, the other as the General East India Company; between whom a contest began both at home and abroad, which proved eminently hurtful to all concerned.

A state of things, such as this, however, was not likely to be of long continuance. It was felt

or fancied that proceedings which had a tendency to lessen the national character in the eyes of the people of India, might, and probably would, lead to the entire ruin of the Indian trade; and hence all classes of the community, from the sovereign downwards, began to express a wish that the differences of the rival companies should be arranged. For a short time the rancour of the parties implicated, kept them from paying any regard to these suggestions; but among trading bodies, as is well known, the hope of gain is ever the ruling passion. As experience proved to them that their own interests were at issue, old grudges, with their causes, ceased to operate, till overtures were mutually made, which led in course of time to a coalition. It was now agreed that the two companies should be formed into one; that the management of their affairs should be committed to a court of twenty-four directors, twelve to be chosen by each Company; that of the annual exports, the amount of which should be fixed by the court of managers, one half should be furnished by each Company; that the court of managers should have the entire direction of all matters relating to trade and settlements, subsequent to this union; but that the factors of each Company should manage separately the stocks which each had sent out previously to the date of that transaction; that seven years should be allowed to wind up the separate concerns of each Company; and that after that period, one great joint-stock should be formed by the final union of the funds of both. This agreement was confirmed by the general courts of both Companies, on the 27th of April, 1702.

On the 22d July of this year, a fresh charter received the royal signature, and the late belligerents assumed the common title of The United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies. An arrangement had previously been proposed respecting the debts and dead stock of both; but several years elapsed ere the questions arising out of such discussions were adjusted. In the mean while no trifling jealousy continued to actuate the proceedings of the functionaries in India, who still regarded one another rather as the servants of hostile factions, than the agents of one society. But a demand, on the part of government, that a loan should be advanced, without interest, towards the necessities of the state, brought about, as if by the power of magic, an adjustment of all minor points. It had become necessary that the two Companies should lay aside all separate views, and join cordially in their endeavours to avert a common danger. All differences subsisting between them were in consequence submitted to the arbitration of Earl Godolphin, the Lord Treasurer of England; and in perfect accordance with his award, the act 6 Anne, chap. 17, was passed.

By the terms of that act it was decreed, that a sum of £1,200,000, without interest, should be advanced by the United Company to government, which being added to an advance formerly made, of £2,000,000, at eight per cent., constituted a loan of £3,200,000, yielding interest at the rate of five per cent. on the whole; that to raise this sum the Company should be empowered to borrow on their common seal to the extent of £1,500,000, or to call in monies to that amount from the proprietors;

that the debt should be added to their capital; that their privileges should be extended till March, 1726: these, with other clauses, regulating the absorption of one species of debt in another, gave to the Company its permanent character. With respect again to the award of Earl Godolphin, it referred solely to the winding up of the concerns of the two Companies, and the blending of their separate properties into one stock, on terms equitable to both. Thus was a final stop put to those heart-burnings and rivalries which had so long divided the mercantile interests of London; and for a season, at least, the nation exulted in the idea of fostering one thriving and efficient association for the protection of its eastern commerce.

When the competitors for Indian commerce were thus united into one corporate body, and the privilege of exclusive trade was by legislative authority conceded to them, the business of the Company became regular and uniform; of the mode of conducting which, and of the most important results arising out of it, a few words will suffice to convey a sufficiently accurate idea.

The principle upon which the adventurers in the trade to India originally framed the constitution of their company, was this:—They met in assemblies, which were called Courts of Proprietors, where they transacted certain parts of the common business; and they chose a definite number of persons from their own body, termed committees, whom they entrusted with other parts of the business which they could not conveniently manage for themselves. The government, therefore, of the general concerns was in the hands, first, of the

proprietors assembled in general court; secondly, of the committees, afterwards called the directors, in their special courts.

To entitle a proprietor to the right of voting in general courts, it was necessary that he should be the owner of £500 of the Company's stock. It had been found that the more adventurous members of the body enjoyed many important advantages, because each proprietor was entitled to a distinct vote for every £500 stock of which he chanced to be possessed; but from the date of Earl Godolphin's award, and the junction of the two Companies, this regulation was repealed, and one vote, and no more, was hereafter allowed to all holders of the requisite qualification.

The Court of Directors consisted of twenty-four members, each of whom must of necessity be possessed of £2,000 at least of the Company's stock. The directors were chosen annually by the proprietors, in the general court; they were permitted to serve two years only without re-election; and they were presided over by two of their own number, called the chairman and deputy-chairman.

The proprietors met regularly in court four times in every year; namely, in the months of March, June, September, and December; the directors might summon general courts at any time, provided they saw reason, and could not refuse to do so if required by nine proprietors qualified to vote. The courts of directors, on the other hand, were held as often, and at such times and places, as they might themselves deem expedient for the despatch of business. Thirteen directors were necessary to

form a court; but their powers extended no farther than to manage the business of routine, for all laws and regulations, all determinations of dividends and grants of money, were made by the court of proprietors. Thus was the whole power entrusted, theoretically, to the court of proprietors; though, in point of fact, it was exercised almost exclusively by the directors.

For conducting the affairs of the Company, again, the directors divided themselves into committees; each of which took charge of a distinct department. The first and most important of these, which consisted invariably of the senior members, composed the committee of correspondence; whose business it was to study the advices from India, and to prepare answers for the inspection of the court of directors. They reported likewise upon the quantity of tonnage requisite for the trade of the season; upon the ports to which the Company's trading vessels should severally be despatched; upon the number of servants, civil and military, at the different stations abroad; and upon the applications made by these for changes, for leave of absence, and for permission to return home. All complaints of grievances, likewise, and all pecuniary demands on the Company, were decided upon in the first instance by this committee, which nominated to all places in the treasury, and in the secretary's, examiners', and auditors' offices.*

The next in point of importance was the commit-

* The whole governing power was, in fact, in the hands of this committee, and continues so to be, though checked by the board of controul, at the present day.

tee of law-suits, the name of which points out distinctly enough the nature of its duties. The members of this committee deliberated and directed in all cases of litigation, advised with counsel, and checked and examined bills of law expenses.

The third committee was that of the treasury. It provided, agreeably to the orders of the Court, for the payment of dividends, and interest on bonds, it negotiated the Company's loans, purchased bullion for exportation, affixed the Company's seal to money-deeds, examined monthly, or oftener, the balance of cash, and decided, in the first instance, pecuniary questions in general, whether arising out of the loss of bonds or the delivery of unregistered diamonds and bullion.

The committee of warehouse was the fourth. All orders for the goods, of which the investment or importation was to consist, came from it. It had the superintendence of the servants employed in the inspection of purchases; determined upon the mode of shipping and conveyance; superintended the landing and warehousing of the goods; arranged the order of sales; and deliberated generally upon the means of promoting and improving the trade.

The fifth committee was that of accounts, which examined all bills of exchange, money certificates, estimates, and accounts of cash and stock, compared advices with bills, and superintended the transfer of stock, with other matters belonging to the accountant's office. A committee of buying and selling was the sixth, which watched the purchase and preparation of articles intended for exportation. The committee of the house composed the seventh, for the purpose of keeping the Company's build-

ings in repair, and adding, from time to time, such offices as might be needed. To this committee was entrusted the privilege of appointing clerks and officers employed in the India House, as well as a power of general inspection over them. The eighth committee, that of shipping, hired vessels, purchased stores, examined officers as to their qualifications, fixed the rate of seamen's wages, distributed the outward cargo, and determined the tonnage allowed for private traffic. The ninth, the committee of private trade, adjusted the accounts of freight and other charges payable on the goods exported for private account in the chartered ships of the Company, regulated the indulgences to private trade homewards, and by examining the commanders of ships as well as by other means, endeavoured to ascertain how far the Company's regulations had been violated or obeyed. The tenth, and last committee, was appointed for the avowed purpose of hindering the growth of private trade. Its peculiar business was to take cognizance of all instances in which the Company's license might be exceeded; it decided upon the controversies to which the encroachments of the private traders gave rise, and applied the penalties which were provided for transgression. "So closely, however, did the provinces of this and the preceding committee border upon one another, and so little, in truth, were their boundaries defined, that the business of the one was not unfrequently transferred to the other."*

* See Mr. Mill, to whose lucid digest of certain official papers, not less than to Mr. Bruce's historical view of Plans for the Government of British India, we are indebted for the condensed sketch given in the preceding pages.

Of each and all of these committees the chairmen were officially members; and as they presided in all courts, whether of directors or proprietors, so were they organs of official communication between the Company and other parties. No agreements could be entered into, no orders issued, till their signature was attached to the deed, —in a word, they formed a species of third estate, in a body framed in strict analogy to the constitution of the empire by which it was protected.

It will be seen from the statement just advanced, relative to the business of the several committees, that as yet the advancement of the Company's commerce constituted the main business, both of the directors and proprietors of stock. The articles which they imported into England consisted chiefly of calicoes and other woven manufactures of India, of raw silk, diamonds, tea, porcelain, pepper, drugs, and saltpetre. The articles which they exported, independently of gold and silver, were lead, quicksilver, woollen cloths, and hardware, of which the proportions varied at different times, and in obedience to the law of contingencies. When their ships arrived from abroad the cargoes were examined at the custom-house, passed on payment of the duties, and warehoused; where they remained till it suited the convenience of the directors to bring them into the market. This again was done as it continues to be done at the present day, by public auction,—for the goods are put up to sale at the India-house, in lots determined by the committee, and transferred to the highest bidder.

CHAPTER XI.

Proceedings of the Company's Agents in India—Contests with the Portuguese and Dutch—The Massacre of Amboyna—Its Consequences—Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta erected into Presidencies—System of Local Government and Trade.

WHILE the domestic constitution of the East India Company was thus attaining, by slow degrees, to consistency, the progress made by its agents abroad, in the establishment of a lucrative commerce, was grievously impeded by the hostility of the Portuguese and the Dutch. Over the former, indeed, our countrymen were not slow in establishing a decided superiority. Best's victory having taught them to hold at nought the military prowess of that people, they ceased to be restrained from any promising adventure by the apprehension of danger; and the marked success which attended them in numerous defensive rencounters, induced them before long to act on the offensive. Having been interrupted in the trade with Persia by a Portuguese fleet, they fitted out a squadron at Surat to avenge the insult, and the Persians gladly joining them, they attacked Ormuz itself, of which, on the 22d of April, 1622, they made themselves masters.*

* They did not retain possession of this place, but gave it up to the Persians, receiving, as the reward of their services, a

In like manner, when the viceroy made an effort, about eight years after, not only to recover Ormuz, but re-establish the Portuguese superiority in these seas, they defeated him in various actions, landing their goods wherever they chose, in the face of his squadrons, and compelling him to seek a suspension of further hostilities, by a treaty of reciprocal good offices and free intercourse.

Widely different, during a long succession of years, were the issues of those contests in which our countrymen found themselves from time to time engaged with the other rival power. Determined to retain in their own hands the monopoly of the spice trade, the Dutch steadily opposed every attempt on the part of the English to establish extensive factories among the Moluccas, over which, whether immediately occupied by themselves, or otherwise, they asserted the proprietary right of conquerors. It was to no purpose that treaties were entered into by the governments at home; or that a council of defence was commissioned to superintend the proceedings of agents abroad. However carefully the former might be expressed, the Dutch found means to evade their execution; whilst the latter was perfectly incapable, had it been so disposed, of protecting the interests of the weaker party against the stronger. The English were in consequence deprived of privilege after privilege, till their trade in the Archipelago became virtually extinct. Their servants were arrested and

share of the plunder, with a grant of half of the customs collected at Gambroon. The latter became thenceforth their chief station in the Persian Gulf.

their goods confiscated, nor were their own persons safe from the violence of men who esteemed every violation of honour and humanity a trifle, provided some desired end could be thereby attained. Last of all came the massacre of Amboyna, a deed which must stamp with indelible infamy the memory of those by whom it was perpetrated, and of which, because of the influence exercised by it over the future proceedings of our countrymen, it will be necessary to give some account.

In a treaty concluded at London on the 17th July, 1619, between the governments of England and the United Provinces, it was stipulated, "that there should be a mutual amnesty, between their subjects in the East, and a mutual restoration of ships and property; that the pepper trade at Java should be equally divided; that the English should have a free trade at Pulicate on the Coromandel coast, on paying half the expenses of the garrison; and that of the trade of the Moluccas and Bandas they should enjoy one third, the Dutch two, paying the expenses of the garrisons in the same proportion." Besides these conditions, which regarded their opposite pretensions, the treaty included arrangements for mutual profit and defence. The Dutch and English East India Companies were to provide each ten ships of war, to be employed exclusively in the Indian seas, and in the protection of the Indian commerce; and the two nations were to unite their efforts to reduce the duties and exactions of the native governments at the different ports. Finally, a council, composed of four members of each Company, was appointed, with the title of the Council of Defence, to superintend the

execution of this treaty; and the treaty itself was to continue in force during twenty years.

In the face of this arrangement, and in contempt of the remonstrance of the Council, the Dutch not only refused to make compensation for past aggressions, but set up claims of superiority, such as the English found it impossible to admit, both in the arrangement of the trade and in the administration of justice. Our countrymen were indeed permitted to settle at different parts, but it was on the assumed condition that they would live subject to the Dutch law, while just so much of the commerce of the country was allowed them as their imperious allies saw fit to grant. They protested against such treatment with natural warmth; but the protest led only to a more fatal result. In February, 1623, Captain Towerson, with nine Englishmen, nine Japanese, and one Portuguese, were seized at Amboyna, under the accusation of a conspiracy to surprise the garrison. They were put to the torture, which, as a matter of course, wrung from them a confession of guilt, and they were executed without delay.

We will not pause to describe either the indignation which this atrocious act excited in London, or the steps which were taken by the Court of Directors, in order to obtain redress. We must content ourselves by stating, that a commission of inquiry was formed by the King's command, which reported in terms consonant with public feeling, and that orders were issued for intercepting and detaining the Dutch East India fleets, till reparation should be afforded. But the Dutch remitted nothing of their pretensions, which, on the contrary,

they now advanced without disguise. They replied to the remonstrance of their neighbours, that they would direct their governor-general in the East Indies to permit the English to retire from all their settlements without paying any duties; that all disputes might be referred to the Council of Defence; that the English might build forts for the protection of their trade, provided they planted them at the distance of thirty miles from those of the Dutch; but "that the administration of politic government, and particular jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, at all such places as owe acknowledgement to the Dutch must remain absolutely with them, to whom belonged the exclusive right to the Moluccas, Bandas, and Amboyna." Thus not even the danger of an English war could induce this phlegmatic people to deviate one handsbreadth from the line of conduct which they had resolved to pursue; and strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless perfectly true, that in this determination, the English, though highly indignant, condescended quietly to acquiesce.

The affair of Amboyna was followed by numerous calamitous events, of which it were needless to give here any regular narrative. The English accepting of the proffered permission, withdrew from almost all the stations in the Archipelago, even Java was evacuated for a time, and a new factory erected in the Island of Lagundy; but the unhealthiness of this situation soon led to its abandonment, and Bantam was again, with the sanction of the Dutch, re-occupied. In the meanwhile, efforts were made to obtain such settlements along the Coromandel coast, as might in some degree

compensate for the loss of other advantages. Factories, it is necessary to observe, had already been established both at Masulipatam and Pulicate, though from the latter the jealousy of the Dutch soon expelled the traders. But though they were equally unsuccessful in their endeavours to find an emporium in Tanjore, a position was at last assumed at Armegon, in the Carnatic, whither in 1628 the factory from Musulipatam was removed. Here some progress was made in the erection of works for the protection of the persons and property of the factors; but the situation proving less advantageous than had been anticipated, they began to cast their eyes elsewhere. Happily, no great while elapsed ere a convenient site was afforded them. In 1640-1, a settlement was formed at Madras; and the permission of the local chief to build a fort having been obtained, the foundations of the second city in the Company's empire were laid.

Up to this moment, the local management of the Company's affairs had been entrusted to two of their principal servants, who, residing at Surat, in Kandesh, and Bantam in the Island of Java, were dignified with the title of presidents. These were severally assisted by councils, composed of the chief merchants of the respective factories, whose authority was made to extend over every other station from the Cape of Good Hope to the Chinese Sea. Hence the trade of eastern India, not less than that of the islands, was conducted by agents in subserviency to the presidency of Bantam, whilst the management of the commerce of the west, including Persia and Arabia, formed the peculiar province of the presidency at Surat. But the wars which now

raged among the natives on the Coromandel coast, soon rendered such an arrangement extremely inconvenient. The Directors were accordingly petitioned to enlarge the fortifications at Madras, and to elevate the settlement to the dignity of a presidency; and though they declined to sanction the former proceeding, they readily gave their approbation to the latter. This, however, was not the only nor the most important change which occurred in the political and commercial position of the Company on the eastern coast of India. A short time previous to the erection of a presidency at Madras, the English obtained in Bengal the first of those peculiar privileges, which were the forerunners of their subsequent power. A medical gentleman, in the service of the Company, by name Broughton, having accompanied a mission from Surat to Agra, was so fortunate as to cure the daughter of Shah Jehan of a severe illness, for which, among other rewards, he received permission to carry on, throughout the empire, a free trade. He proceeded next to Bengal, where his abilities obtained for him equal favour from the Nabob, who extended to the English nation the privilege which the emperor had conferred personally on himself; and in the year 1636, the first English factory was erected at Hoogly, a town situated on one of the branches of the Ganges, about one hundred miles from the sea.

No great while after this valuable acquisition had been made to the Company's possessions, the Island of Bombay was conferred as the marriage portion of his bride, by the Portuguese sovereign, upon Charles II. A squadron, having 500 troops

on board, was immediately sent out to take possession; but a misunderstanding having arisen between the governor and the British admiral as to the extent of the cession, permission to occupy the place was refused. The consequence was, that the soldiers landing at Anjendivah, perished of famine and disease, whilst the fleet returned to England for fresh instructions. After many delays, arising from the disinclination of the Portuguese to fulfil the compact, these were at last afforded. Bombay thus passed into the hands of the English Government, by whom it was made over with due formality to the Company, though it was not till a period considerably later that it obtained the rank of a presidency.

Notwithstanding all this, the prospects of the Company continued for some time to be obscured, partly through the continued hostility of the Dutch, partly through the mal-practices of their own servants. At one period, indeed, the Hollanders obtained so complete a command of the sea, that Surat itself was blockaded; and though Cromwell, by humbling their power in Europe, compelled them to assume a less haughty attitude in India, this state of things lasted only during the life of the usurper. We accordingly find them 1664 engaged in an unfortunate contest, in which not the Dutch only, but the French were opposed to them; whilst in 1684-5 they were formally expelled from Java, and compelled, by the loss of Bantam, to transfer the seat of the government of the Eastern coast to Fort St. George. In like manner their financial affairs were grievously involved, by the practice, common to all their

agents, of carrying on an extensive trade on their own account. It was in vain that positive orders were from time to time sent out, prohibiting this custom. As yet the Company had not learned that the most effectual means of obtaining faithful servants is to pay them adequately; and hence all their remonstrances were slighted as they deserved to be, by men who felt that obedience would of necessity be followed by personal ruin.

In the meanwhile, the merchants of Surat found themselves exposed to imminent hazard, from the predatory attack of Sivajee, with whom, as has been already shown, they came more than once into contact. Though robbed at the moment of property to some amount, they were not, however, in the end heavy sufferers from these rencounters; for the Mogul, pleased with their gallantry, extended both to them and their employers new and important privileges of trade. The case was different on the side of Hoogly, where the factory became unfortunately involved in a dispute with the native powers. They had imprudently made seizure of one of the Mogul's junks, on the pretence that its commander sought to violate their charter; and hostilities began, in which the interests of the Company had well nigh suffered a permanent injury. Yet even this was not the only serious calamity that threatened them. A spirit of mutiny appeared both in Madras and Bombay, which in the latter case was not allayed without the exertion of a higher authority than that of even the Court of Directors; indeed the matter had assumed at one period an aspect so serious, that it was esteemed necessary to provide, by other mea-

sures, against its recurrence. With this view the Supreme Government, which had hitherto been established at Surat, was removed to Bombay, which in 1687 was elevated to the dignity of a regency, and invested with unlimited powers over the rest of the Company's settlements.

We have said that the factory at Bengal became involved in hostilities with the Mogul, which had well nigh brought about the utter ruin of the English interests in the East. The quarrel came to a height in the year 1685-6, when the resolution was adopted on the part of the Directors at home to seek redress by force of arms. Ten ships of war, with six companies of troops, were accordingly despatched to Bengal, with instructions to seize and fortify Chittagong, and to retaliate in every practicable manner both upon the Nabob and the Mogul. From beginning to end the campaign was marked by misfortunes. The ships arriving one by one, hostilities were begun ere there was force at hand adequate to carry on operations with effect; and hence, after a useless cannonade of Hoogly, the whole were fain to seek shelter in Calcutta, at that time a small town called Chuttanuttee, till an accommodation could be brought about with the Nabob. Here, however, the Company's servants proved themselves quite incapable of coping with their wily antagonists. A truce was granted, which the Nabob employed in preparing the means of a formidable attack; and in spite of an obstinate defence, the valuable factories at Patna and Cossimbatore were taken and plundered. It might have been expected that now, at least, the English would be content to retire peaceably to their

settlement at Hoogly; but the case was not so. There arrived from England in 1687 two vessels of war commanded by one Captain Heath, which, in obedience to orders received under a different state of affairs, brought about an ill-timed renewal of the war. Heath, after plundering Balasore, in the face of negotiations actually pending, made an abortive attempt to surprise and destroy Chittagong; after which he took all the Company's servants and effects on board, and set sail for Madras.

Bengal was now wholly abandoned; but Arungzebe, smarting under the sense of injuries received, issued orders to attack the English in all their stations, and expel them from India. The factory at Surat was seized; Bombay was assaulted by the fleets of the Siddies; the greater part of the island was taken, and the governor besieged in the town and castle. In like manner Masulipatam and Visigapatam were both occupied, in the last of which the Company's agents, with several of their servants, were slain. Absolute ruin, indeed, appeared to threaten their interests in India, but their own abject submission, aided by the application of the native merchants, served to allay the storm; they were pardoned and reinstated in their former position. Nevertheless, the loss sustained, both in money and reputation, was very great, whilst an opening was made for the admission of a rival, destined in the end to prove more formidable than any to which the English East India Company had yet been opposed.

So early as the year 1664, the French had directed their attention, with no ordinary interest, to the commerce of the Indian seas. Upon this they

entered with such an excess of zeal over prudence, as to defeat in a great measure their own designs; * but the troubles in which the English were now involved afforded to them a handle, of which, with their wonted sagacity, they hastened to take advantage. At the very moment when our countrymen were engaged in war with the native powers, they contrived to gain an establishment at Pondicherry, which they fortified with infinite patience and industry, and raised to a high rank among the European settlements. Into it they poured troops with warlike stores of every description; nor did any great while elapse ere the Company, in part, perhaps, stimulated by the example thus set, in part actuated by the remembrance of past misfortunes, proceeded to act upon a similar principle. In 1689, a dispatch was forwarded from the court in London, which contained the following avowal:—"The increase of our revenue is the subject of our care as much as our trade; it is that must maintain our force, when twenty accidents may interrupt our

* The French first endeavoured to gain a footing in India in 1601; but their ships which sailed from St. Maloes never reached their destination. In 1604, a French East India Company was established by charter; it failed in effecting any thing, and was dissolved. Nearly thirty years after a similar occurrence took place, when an attempt was made, without effect, to colonize Madagascar. But it was not till 1672 that a French force succeeded in capturing St. Thome, one of the earliest stations belonging to the Portuguese, though then in the possession of the King of Golcondah. It was subsequently wrested from them by the Dutch, and restored to the native sovereign, of whom the French purchased the village and district of Pondicherry, where they now established themselves. They had a second presidency or regency in Mauritius or the Isle of France.

trade; it is that must make us a nation in India; without that we are but as a great number of interlopers, united by his Majesty's royal charter, fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us; and upon this account it is that the wise Dutch, in their general advices which we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade." This was all that was wanting in order to give a new character to the tenure by which the possessions of the English in India were held. Already well disposed to strengthen themselves in their various stations, the Company's local agents gladly acted upon the hint thus thrown out; and having purchased Tegnapatam, a town and harbour on the Coromandel coast, a little to the south of Pondicherry, they strengthened it by a wall and bulwarks, and called it Fort St. David's. Nor did any great while elapse ere another fortress was built, out of which the great capital of British India has with astonishing rapidity arisen. In the year 1698, the Zemindarry rights, in the villages of Chuttanuttee, Govindpore, and Calcutta, were made over by the Mogul to the East India Company, by whose direction the works of Fort William were immediately, though cautiously, commenced. Nevertheless, our countrymen were as far as ever from encouraging the notion, that they possessed within themselves strength sufficient to resist even the weakest of the native powers, within whose limits they chanced to be located. That knowledge was indeed eventually forced upon them by circumstances over

which they possessed no controul; but as yet the utmost to which they looked was the possible influence which a fortified position might produce upon their negotiations and mercantile dealings with their neighbours.

From this date down to the middle of the eighteenth century, the history of the British in India records little else besides a succession of attempts on the part of the Company to suppress private trade; and a succession of efforts on the part of private traders to break in upon the Company's monopoly. It is not necessary for our present purpose to give of these even a meagre sketch: it will be more to the purpose if we close the present chapter with an outline of the system of internal management pursued by the Company's servants in matters both commercial and political.

There are three points of view in which the proceedings of the Company's agents abroad demand to be examined: first, as to the kind of government established over Europeans; secondly, as to their mode of preserving order among the natives; and thirdly, as to their dealings in disposing of cargoes imported, and procuring such articles as were requisite for the supply of the home market. With respect to the first of these heads, it is sufficient to observe, that the general business of India was carried on under the management of three presidencies, one at Bombay, another at Madras, and a third at Calcutta. * As yet these presidencies were in no degree dependent one upon another; they were in all

* This last was created so late as 1707, the business at Calcutta having been conducted, till that time, under the government of the Presidency of Madras.

respects absolute, each within its own limits, and responsible only to the Company in England. They consisted severally of a president and council; the latter composed sometimes of nine, and sometimes of twelve members, in whose hands ample powers were lodged, and who transacted all business, both fiscal and mercantile, according to the sense of a majority of the members. Both presidents and council held commissions signed by the chairmen of the Company; but whilst the former were nominated directly from home, the latter were composed, except when the arrangement was explicitly forbidden, of the superior servants belonging to the non-military class, promoted to that high station according to the rule of seniority.

The powers exercised by the governor or president in council were, for a time, those of masters over servants, in regard to all persons employed in any capacity by the Company; with regard to such of their countrymen as were not in the service of the Company, they were armed with no further authority than to seize, imprison, and send them to England. No doubt even this enabled them to commit with impunity numerous acts of oppression, or at least of severity; but the right of administering, first martial, and afterwards civil and criminal justice, being in due time granted to them, their powers became, as a necessary consequence, greatly enlarged. Nevertheless, it was felt that these rights, however clearly defined, rested upon a somewhat insecure foundation. A charter was accordingly granted in 1726, by which the Company were permitted to establish a mayor's court at each of their three presidencies, consisting of a

mayor and nine aldermen, with powers to decide in civil cases of every description. From this jurisdiction an appeal lay to the president and council, who were likewise vested with authority to hold quarter sessions, for the exercise of penal judicature, whilst a separate court of requests was instituted for the decision, by summary procedure, of pecuniary questions of inconsiderable amount.

Such was the machinery by which an attempt was made to dispense justice among the European residents dependent on the several Presidencies. It was rudely put together, and proved in more than one instance far from efficient; but it was all that the temper of the times permitted to be applied, or, to speak more truly, the prejudices or interests of men in power would sanction. With respect to the preservation of order among the natives, as the territorial limits of the Company's empire extended then only to a narrow circle drawn round Calcutta, the task was neither a difficult one, nor the system pursued for its accomplishment very complicated. The Company, in its capacity of zemindar, held the usual zemindarry courts, in which justice was dispensed, as far as possible, according to established usage and custom. There was the Foujdary Court, for criminal law; the Cutcherry, for civil causes; and the Collector's Court, where all questions respecting revenue were heard and determined. The judges in these courts were servants of the Company, appointed by the governor and council, and holding their offices at pleasure. No useless forms encumbered their proceedings; their mode of procedure was both simple and summary; and their punishments extended to fine,

imprisonment, labour upon the roads in chains, flagellation, and death. We are informed, that to the European mode of inflicting capital punishment the Mogul government objected. It was held derogatory to the honour of a Mussulman that he should be hanged; but no objection was made to the act of flogging him to death, which was generally accomplished by a few strokes, from a skilful hand, of the Chawbuck. *

But the most important part of the business devolved upon the Company's agents was the management of the trade, which was conducted after a fashion correspondent to the condition of the country within which they carried it on. The sale, indeed, of such commodities as were conveyed from Europe, was transacted in the simplest and easiest of all possible ways; they were disposed of by auction, in the very same manner in which the Indian goods imported into England were disposed of to London traders. It was then left to the native merchants to distribute them through the country, a measure which the unsettled state of the provinces during the decline of the Mogul empire rendered absolutely necessary. But for the purchase, collection, and custody of the goods which constituted the freight to Europe, a much more complicated system of operations was necessary. For the reception of these factories were erected, and warehouses built, at convenient spots throughout the provinces. Here agents called chiefs of factories resided, who in their turn sent out subordinate agents, to deal with the agents of the manu-

* Seventh Report of the Committee of Secresy, 1773.

facturing population, or the growers of such natural productions as were sought. These productions again were conveyed to the coast, and embarked, with as little delay as possible, after ships arrived to receive them. Nor was this all. Under the disorderly and inefficient system of government which, during the latter years of the Mahomedan sovereignty prevailed in India, deposits of property were always exposed to the rapacity of public functionaries, or the depredations of private plunderers. It became therefore an object of importance to construct fortifications around the factories, and to keep their inmates armed and disciplined for self-defence as perfectly as circumstances would allow. To this consideration, indeed, the Company, at a very early period, paid attention, by maintaining at these stations professional troops, as often as the sanction of the rulers or their negligence would permit.

Of the troops thus organised, the chief command was vested in the presidents or governors of the several presidencies. They consisted partly of recruits sent out in the ships of the Company, partly of deserters from the other European nations settled in India, and partly, at least at Bombay and Surat, of Topasses, the mixed offspring of Portuguese and Indian parents, or converts to the Catholic faith from Hindooism. These were regularly trained and uniformed; but besides them, the natives were already, to a trifling extent, employed in the military service of the Company, under the denomination of Sepoys, a word signifying soldier, and a corruption of the Indian term Spahi. They were armed principally with swords and

shields, though exercised likewise to the use of the musket; their dress was a turban, vest, and long drawers, and they were commanded by native officers, according to the custom of the country, under the general superintendence of one or more Englishmen. No attempt was yet made to drill them to European tactics; but on more than one occasion they found opportunities to prove, that as far as steadiness and hardihood in danger mark the proper material for a soldier, they were scarcely behind their Christian comrades.

Besides possessing the command of the army, the president was the sole organ of communication, by letter or otherwise, with the country powers. This was a means of adding in no slight degree to his importance; for though the council expected to be informed both as to the tendency and result of such communications, it rested with him to lay his statements before them in such order and at such times as he might himself deem expedient. It formed a prodigious source of influence, likewise, both to him and to the council, that the appointment of persons to all lucrative and honourable situations in the country rested with them. In their gift were the chiefships of factories, the superintendence of outstations, and other posts of profit; nor were they very scrupulous in nominating one another, sometimes to the glaring detriment of the public interests.

The civil servants of the Company, resident in India, were at this time denominated writers, factors, junior merchants, and senior merchants. They remained in the capacity of writers, for five years, during which they were employed in attending to

the inferior details of commerce; their first promotion was to the rank of factor, their next to that of junior merchant, in each of which the period of service was three years. After passing through these gradations they became senior merchants, while out of the class of senior merchants were taken by seniority the members of council, and, when no particular appointment interfered, even the presidents themselves.

Such was the constitution of the Company's government, as established at an early period over their settlements in India, and such it continued to be, with few and partial alterations, down to the latter part of the eighteenth century.

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